Active Transportation Plan

Sturgeon Lake First Nation

2024

Welcome to the Sturgeon Lake Active Transportation Plan (ATP).

The Chief and Council of Sturgeon Lake First Nation have prioritized the health and wellbeing of our community and membership and support active lifestyles and the numerous health benefits it can provide. The ATP is a community-based project that has been supported by Chief and Council with the goals of helping our members move through our community more safely, and help people reconnect with nature, land, our culture and each other. Our community is uniquely ours, with our members living in subdivisions that are almost 10 kilometres apart. This circumstance has resulted in friends and families being separated by distance, making it difficult to meet with friends and family, particularly if you do not have a way to travel safely. The ATP has been designed with the feedback and direction of community members and provides you with a network of paths and trails designed to provide safe options to using vehicles to get around and provide opportunities where people can get outside to experience and enjoy our beautiful lake, our woods, and open spaces.

Thank you to everyone who have helped to prepare the ATP, and I am looking forward to seeing people of all ages and abilities enjoying our beautiful community.

-Chief Christine Longjohn

Acknowledgements

The Sturgeon Lake ATP was developed through the direction of Chief and Council, and in cooperation with the Project Steering Committee. The goal of the ATP was for the community to identify the key destinations and pathways that would make up the Plan, and advise on what conditions need to be addressed to help the ATP meet the goals of the community members. We would like to acknowledge and thank all of the community members who took the time to provide their input and share their ideas on how to prepare ATP.

We also wish to formal acknowledge the following people for their work on the ATP:

Chief and Council

Chief Christine Longjohn

Councillor Velmer Ermine

Councillor Solomon Sanderson

Councillor Fred Felix

Councillor Anita Parenteau

Councillor Bernard Moosehunter

Councillor Mark Daniels

Steering Committee Members

Rob Coffee – Special Projects Coordinator

Karl Ballantyne - Elder

Fred Felix - Councillor

Daisy Felix

Irvin Peters

Jonas Sanderson

Elder Willie Ermine for sharing his knowledge which has been presented in the History section of the ATP.

Project Team

Danny Gray – Casa Boldt Consulting

Paul Whitenect – Casa Boldt Consulting

Abram Hartrick – Archangel Art – Graphic Design

We would like to express a special thank you to Karl Ballantyne who participated as our Elder on the Project Steering Committee. Karl dedicated his time to the project even when he wasn't feeling well. Karl had a lot of great ideas and shared several stories with the group. Unfortunately, Karl passed away before the ATP was complete, but his insights are found throughout the Plan and he is truly missed by his community. Thank you, Karl.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1

1.0 Introduction 3

1.1. What is Active Transportation? 5
1.2. Benefits of Active Transportation 5
1.3. Why an Active Transportation Plan? 6
1.4. Purpose of the Active Transportation Plan 6

2.0 History Of Sturgeon Lake First Nation 7

2.1. Sturgeon Lake First Nation 7
2.2. Local Geography 7
2.3. The Lake 8
2.4. Key Cultural Locations 9
2.5. Legends of Ogopogo and Little People 9
2.6. Transportation 10

3.0 Glossary Of Terms 11

4.0 Study Process And Work Plan 12

4.1. Study Background and Project Steering Committee 12
4.2. Work Plan 13

5.0 Key Findings 17

5.1. Public Engagement Findings 17
5.2. Traffic Study 18

6.0 Guiding Principles 20

7.0 Active Transportation Features 22

7.1. Types of Active Transportation Routes 22
7.2. Signage 23
7.3. Furniture 24

8.0 The Active Transportation Network 27

8.1. Active Transportation Routes 28
Primary Routes 28
Secondary Routes 30
Connector Routes 33
Water Routes 34
Future Routes 35

9.0 Education Programs 36

9.1. Cycling Programs 36
9.2. Canoe/Kayak Programs 37

10.0 Promoting Safety 38

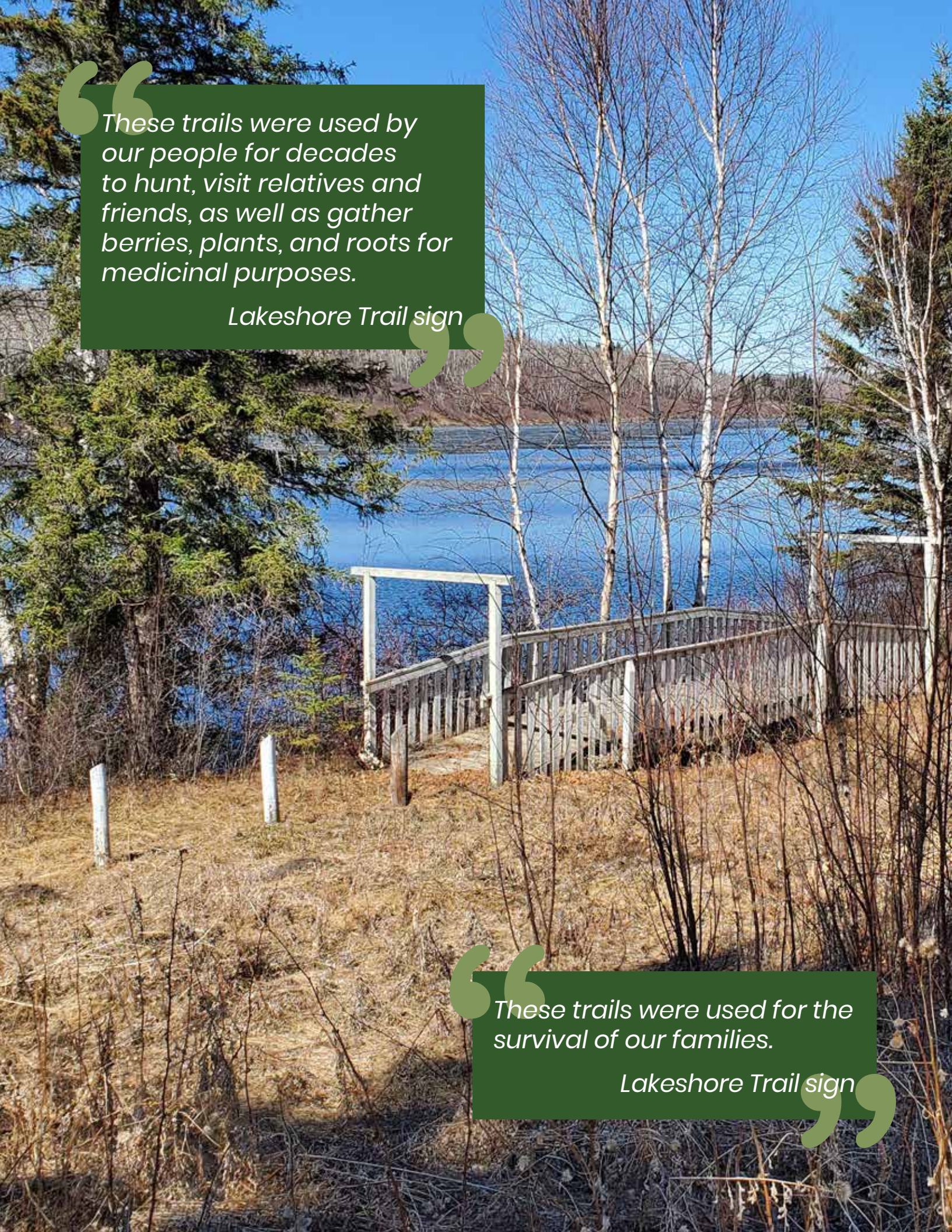
10.1. Traffic Safety 38
10.2. Dogs 39
10.3. Personal Safety 39

11.0 Implementation 41

11.1. Immediate Implementation Routes 41
11.2. Remaining Implementation Routes 42
11.3. Community Health Assessment 43
11.4. Implementation Schedule 43

12.0 Conclusion 44

Appendices 45


These trails were used by our people for decades to hunt, visit relatives and friends, as well as gather berries, plants, and roots for medicinal purposes.
Lakeshore Trail sign
These trails were used for the survival of our families.
Lakeshore Trail sign

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sturgeon Lake First Nation Active Transportation Plan (ATP) was developed through the significant contributions of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and community members who participated in surveys and discussions with the consulting team. Our members are the experts in our community who have identified the needs and opportunities involved with moving around the community and whose feedback informed the ideas and solutions considered to be most likely to achieve the goals of the ATP.

This Plan is intended to provide a framework for the creation of a comprehensive Active Transportation (AT) network to support a healthy community and the increasing demand for alternative, active transportation options. The AT network being considered in Sturgeon Lake First Nation includes all forms of non-motorized transportation infrastructure including multi-purpose trails, nature-based paths and trails, water ways and the shoulders of our residential roadways.

Sturgeon Lake First Nation Chief and Council have directed the Administration to take a phased approach toward the development of the AT network. This provides benefits to the community, which include:

- smaller, more manageable phases of AT network development being undertaken each year
- leverage funding dollars to undertake the improvements included in each phase wherever possible
- providing high-quality infrastructure investments that are aimed at improving the overall health, safety, and wellbeing of our members

The completed ATP is made up of 13 interconnected pathways, categorized as primary, secondary, connector and water routes. The key primary routes is a 10-kilometer paved multiuse pathway connecting the East and West subdivisions. This route follows Sturgeon Lake Road, but is separated from the

road for safety reasons. Two other primary routes are paved links between the store to the East subdivision, and the East subdivision to the new subdivision. The key secondary route is a naturalized pathway that links the Amisk Cultural site to the East subdivision. The remaining secondary routes involve linkages to key cultural sites, and a paved route that links the West subdivision and the school. The connector routes link key destinations and cultural sites with the main pathways. The two water routes link the Amisk Cultural site with the East and West end beaches.

The ATP also provides opportunities to integrate local art, furniture and both direction and informational signage using English, Cree and Syllabics. The informational signage will be used to identify important cultural sites, provide educational opportunities such as identifying native plants and how they were used in traditional Indigenous livelihoods.

Once the ATP is built out, the new AT network is intended to help all community members, regardless of their mobility needs, move more safely and efficiently through their community. Implementing local art pieces and cultural elements into the network will help to reinforce the values of the community, showcase local talent and help members take ownership of their community.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sturgeon Lake Fist Nation is an Indigenous community, situated within the Sturgeon Lake valley in rural and central Saskatchewan. Since the introduction of the automobile, our members developed a strong reliance on motorized vehicles, shifting away from other forms of transportation that were traditionally used, including horseback, walking, and jogging. Over the years, federal policies in how Indigenous communities develop have shifted, requiring new settlements to develop in the form of residential subdivisions. These neighbourhood clusters of homes crammed various families and community members together on 0.2 acre parcels of land and resulted in the erosion of the rural solitude we were accustomed to. This policy shift was detrimental to our people in that it resulted in residential subdivisions being developed on each end of our home reserve, approximately ten kilometers apart from one another; and further deepened our dependency on the automobile to access our daily needs and conveniences.

There are a variety of reasons for an increased interest in improving Active Transportation throughout our community, including:

1. **Safety –** the most critical issue is safety, whether it is children walking to school, adults out for a stroll, picking berries, or cycling to work, safety should be a primary concern, particularly along Sturgeon Lake Road where speed limits are eighty kilometers per hour and pedestrians are using the narrow shoulders to move through the community.
2. **Lifestyle –** leading a healthy and active lifestyle provides significant benefits to everyone. There is an increased awareness that walking, running and cycling is an important part of staying healthy.

> *Active Transportation has the potential to revitalize our land-based culture and traditions, restoring our role as protectors of Mother Earth and enhancing our community.*

Providing safe opportunities to move around will encourage people of all ages and abilities to actively enjoy the outdoors.

3. **Affordability –** Active transportation provides a cost-effective option to driving an automobile, especially with increasing costs for fuel, insurance and vehicles. As prices rise, more and more people will seek safe alternatives to auto-dependency.

4. **Culture and Traditions –** our ancestors lived harmoniously off the land, protecting Mother Earth from destruction, while obtaining what was necessary to survive. An immediate connection to the land and our universal understanding of our role in the ecosystem was formed by walking the land and taking in the natural beauty that surrounds us. Active Transportation has the potential to revitalize our land-based culture and traditions, restoring our role as protectors of Mother Earth and enhancing our community for the seven generations that follow us.

5. **Environmental Sustainability –** There is increased awareness of the environmental consequences of our lifestyle. As a result, more people seek to shift from the automobile toward alternative modes of transportation such as walking and cycling. While the interest exists, our infrastructure remains insufficient to support safe and convenient participation. The AT Plan supports our community's interest to reduce our carbon footprint and protecting Mother Earth from irreparable harm.

1.1. What is Active Transportation?

Active Transportation (AT) is using your own power to get from one place to another. Although AT generally focuses on walking and cycling, other options include:

- skateboarding
- in-line skating/rollerblading
- jogging and running
- non-mechanized wheel chairing
- snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- canoeing/kayaking

Similar to the road network that allow vehicles to move from place to place; active transportation also involves a network with dedicated sidewalks, bike lanes, pathways, crosswalks, trails, benches, and bike racks that allow people to move from one destination to another. The goal of the AT network is to ensure people can go wherever they want safely, comfortably, and efficiently.

> *Active Transportation provides the benefit of allowing people to be physically active in everyday life and provides opportunity for social interaction.*

1.2. Benefits of Active Transportation

Active Transportation provides many benefits to community members, most notably by allowing people to be physically active in everyday life. Even moderate amounts of exercise can improve both physical and mental health, help lower the risk of heart disease and relieve stress. Active Transportation also provides opportunities for social interactions through chance encounters with other community members. The ATP identifies opportunities to improve the safety and efficiency of active transportation allowing people to become more active.

Active Transportation also has benefits for the local community, including:

- Environmental Benefits: AT leads to reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, which contributes to energy savings, less noise and water pollution.
- Economic Benefits: AT can foster economic health by reducing transportation costs such gasoline, parking, and vehicle maintenance, encouraging small business growth related to AT options, and encouraging tourism.
- Community Safety: AT leads to safer communities due to more people outside and moving through the community. More people having eyes on the street will reduce the opportunity for crime. AT provides crosswalks across busy streets, and separates vehicles from cyclists and pedestrians, which leads to safer transportation routes.
- Improved Mobility: AT provides improved mobility for children, elderly, those with disabilities, and those who do not have access to a car.

1.3. Why an Active Transportation Plan?

Sturgeon Lake First Nation is spread out over a large area, with two distinct areas approximately ten kilometres apart. The western portion of the community includes a residential subdivision, the school, administrative building, and health centre; while the eastern portion contains two residential subdivision, sports fields, a store and gas station. The two areas are linked by a main corridor, Sturgeon Lake Road (the Road), which is a busy roadway with vehicles and people travelling back and forth between the two areas. The Road forms a relatively straight line between the two developed areas of the community and contributes to high rates of vehicle speed.

As the main corridor in the community, school aged children walk or cycle along the Road to attend school, and most everyone will have to cross the Road at some point in their travel to school and other community facilities. Currently, there are no crosswalks providing safe passage across the Road, and the shoulder of the Road is narrow, particularly during winter months, making the passage along the main corridor unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Safety concerns exist along Sturgeon Lake Road given the two competing uses of pedestrians and vehicles, which is especially heightened after dark and during winter months. Improved facilities along the Road are needed to make walking and cycling safe along the main corridor. Furthermore, with improved facilities, people are more likely to pursue active transportation options which would help reduce traffic volumes, reduce the carbon footprint of our community, and contribute to a more active and healthy community.

1.4. Purpose of the Active Transportation Plan

The purpose of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is to establish a vision for Sturgeon Lake First Nation (SLFN) to help identify ways for the community to develop safe, comfortable transportation options and routes for its members. The community has expressed concern over the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly school aged youth. The goal of the ATP is to address these concerns and improve the safety and quality of the transportation routes for pedestrians, cyclists and people rolling, and examine ways to encourage other forms of active transportation.

To achieve these goals, the ATP will specifically address the safety concerns along the east-west pedestrian corridor and prioritize walking and cycling plans throughout the community. The ATP will consider the development of a pedestrian bridge across the Sturgeon River to link the sports fields, store and gas bar with the East subdivision areas, and address safety concerns in this area. The ATP will be designed to create safe and comfortable routes for both transportation and recreational purposes. The ATP will be designed primarily for youth, as the safety of its youth is paramount for the community.

2 HISTORY OF STURGEON LAKE FIRST NATION

Contributed by Elder Willie Ermine

2.1. Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Located at the south end of the boreal forest, Sturgeon Lake First Nation is approximately 50 kilometres north of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Cree Chief Ah-yah-tus-kum-ik-im-am (William Twatt) signed Treaty 6 near Fort Carlton on August 23, 1876, and received a reserve at Sturgeon Lake in 1878. Originally known as the William Twatt Band, in 1963 its name was changed to the Sturgeon Lake Band, and later to Sturgeon Lake First Nation.

The government of Canada has deemed that Sturgeon Lake is owned by the people of Sturgeon Lake First Nation. This is one of the only First Nations in the country to own their lake, giving them a unique opportunity to utilize its resources for transportation, tourism, recreation and fishing.

It is important to understand the long and interesting history of the community in order to understand the importance and significance of the key destinations and pathways. It is essential for the stories of the community to be integrated into the ATP through art and informational signage at key locations along the ATP. It is also important to honour our forefathers who have walked this land for centuries before us. The goal of the ATP is not only to help community members move safely and efficiently through their community, but to provide a canvas for the community to tell its story, honour our ancestors and help to pass along key teachings to youth using the trails and pathways.

2.2. Local Geography

The south side of the lake immediately east of the Amisk site is known as Nayewatimihk. The word means “a sudden drop of land”; or perhaps it relates to the lake such as a “deep drop of lake bottom” or “deep along the edge.” The lake is in a valley where the land drops suddenly and sharply from the height of land. The fields located at the top of the hill are cultivated with commodity crops and livestock. The south side of the lake near the bend is a possible buffalo jump. At this location is a very steep drop of land and stone lithics (tools) have been found at the top of the hill.

Given its geographic location at the beginning of the northern boreal forest, means this forested area is abundant with wildlife. At anytime one can see baldheaded eagles and golden eagles. Bears live in the hills and moose wander through the area. Beavers live in the lake and make their homes with mud, sticks, stones and chewed poplar. Beavers’ favorite food is the bark of poplar trees. The whole shoreline along Sturgeon Lake has been cleared of poplar trees because, over the years, the beavers have cut them all down to eat and make their homes.

2.3. The Lake

The lake and the surrounding landforms were scoured by the retreating Laurentian Glacier and its melt water about 11,000 years ago. The hill tops were the shores and ancient people had their camps at those top locations. Arrow heads and other stone tools have been found at the top of the hills. Given it is a glacial-formed lake, it is deep which created good conditions for sturgeon, white fish and other deep-water fish. Sturgeons existed in the lake once and may still be around because huge holes in fishing nets have been reported.

The original name of the lake given by Indigenous peoples living in the area was "Namêw Sâkahikan". Historically, Indian Affairs' permits listed the lake by the hybrid name of "Namêw lake", and eventually it was given an English translation as Sturgeon Lake. Historically, around 1740, fur traders and explorers named the river (now Shell River) that drains into the North Saskatchewan River as "Pakitahwâkan Brook". Because the river was an entry point to the lake, the name "Pakitahwâkan" must have originated here at the lake and used by our people to identify it as a good site for net fishing of sturgeon. Over the years, the river was re-named "Shell River" and the lake took on the name Pakitahwâkan" which means place of setting nets for fish, therefore, Pakitahwâkan Sâkahikan as the current usage.

The Sturgeon River, which drains out of Sturgeon Lake on the East side, was used extensively during the logging years of the early 1900's. The region is said to have had some of the largest stands of white spruce in the western interior. The white spruce trees harvested in Sturgeon Lake could range in size up to thirty inches in diameter at the base (Massie, 2014). To move the trees, log booms were assembled throughout the winter on the lake and the river damned at the outlet of the river. The water would be released during the spring and it carried the logs down river into the North Saskatchewan River and to Prince Albert. Some posts still visible at the site are likely from the early 1900's.

The Sturgeon Lake Lumber Company, based out of Prince Albert, began operations in 1902 and operated a sawmill at Sturgeon Lake. The mill site was located on the East end of the lake was a virtual town with log shacks, bunkhouses, and a company store. Elder George Ermine stated:

"That was the camp that was located downhill from where 'Myosees' [Alice Badger] lives now... that was where the camp was located. That was also the place where the engine buildings were. The blacksmith shop was also located there and that was where the camp was. Where Pat Anderson used to live...on this side...there was a camp there also. Those were the people that purchased the logs and lived in that place. Those that handled the different machinery lived along the lake...they had a camp there. Engineers and all the equipment was all there (personal communications, 1984)."

A Steam engine broke through the ice during the logging years of the early 1900's, and it remains submerged in the lake. There is an old road leading to the lake which may have been the entry point for the engine that eventually plunged into the lake once on the ice.

During the severe drought of the 1930s, the lake's water level dropped significantly, and the water line moved away from the shore leaving it dry. During this time, a wagon trail was discovered all along the shore from east to west during these years of drought.

2.4. Key Cultural Locations

There is a long history of people living in the area, going back centuries. It is not uncommon to find arrow heads and other tools throughout the area. One of the oldest graves found on Sturgeon Lake First Nation is the resting place of Chiefs and contains about 8 graves. This location is near the ball diamonds behind Alex Badger's residence. The graveyard at the west hill contains a mass grave dating back to the pandemic of 1918.

Located along the south side of the lake within the First Nation, the Amisk site is a key cultural facility for the community. The facility was envisioned by the late Elder George Ermine and continued by his son Robert Ermine who was instrumental in the building of this beautiful facility to benefit our youth. The Amisk site has a boat launch, covered picnic area, small cabins and a Sacred Circle site for youth. A larger vision for this site includes a new multi-purpose building and upgraded docks, which are currently in the planning stage. The new facility will offer cultural teachings to youth, along with land-based learning, life-skill training and recreational opportunities for community members and visitors. The Amisk site is a key destination in the ATP both because of its important cultural significance as well as its role in the water routes and as the trailhead to important ATP pathways.

Along the lake short trail, near the area of the Sacred Circle, is an area where red ochre flows out of the ground. This red ochre is a favorite of medicine people as a healing agent and was also used for rock paintings and even for painting houses.

2.5.Legends of Ogopogo and Little People

The deep water also hosts the Sturgeon Lake monster, or the local Ogopogo. This creature is said to look like the ancient plesiosaur and has been seen in this lake by many people over the years. It is said they have caves and tunnels that connect to different lakes in the region. Legend also says the Sturgeon Lake being(s) protect the water and the lake.

Along with the local Ogopogo, a large creature thought to be a giant turtle was tracked on the sand as it came out of the water when Amisk was being constructed. The imprint on the sand had a central body mark and four claw-like prints, about two feet apart on the sides. It came a few feet to the shore and returned to the lake.

The hills surrounding the lake are also one of the areas where little people live. Indigenous legend says little people live in woods near sandy hills along bodies of water, making the hills a perfect location. At certain times their drums are said to be heard in the silence of evenings. They are also attracted by the drumming during ceremonies at Amisk.

2.6.Transportation

Before vehicles the construction of grid roads, wagon and foot trails were the means of transportation in the area. The old wagon trail was the main road for Sturgeon Lake. The old wagon trail connected Sturgeon Lake with Prince Albert, and is still evident in parts of the community. This trail was the main road until the new road was built around 1970. The walking trail along the lake shore was created in olden times by people hunting ducks, beavers, muskrats, otters, and other trapping activity in the past. The trail leads from Amisk to the East subdivision, and is now used for transportation, recreation and educational opportunities. At the east end of the trail was an old bridge, now disassembled, which was used as a swim-site for youth, and a pleasurable fishing site for others. One narrative speaks about someone falling through the cracks of the bridge and drowning as they were crossing the bridge during the nighttime.

Other trails also existed and are still evident in places, including one that runs along the height of the land along the lake in the middle areas of the reserve. This trail will be mapped out and identified as a route in the ATP. Other trails include one leading to the Store at Alingly, others to the Brialea area, and many others within the Reserve leading to pasture lands and other frequented locations.

Prior to the early 1970's, travel in the community was mostly done by horse and wagon. The last horse teams were sold in about 1970 and thereafter no horse teams were used for travel.

Cars were introduced in the 1950's with "4 Dollars" owning the first Ford Model-T. Because of a shortage of gas, sometimes "4 Dollars" would run out of gas and would have to tie a horse to his Model-T so he could travel. The community humorously refers to this as the first hybrid vehicle at Sturgeon Lake First Nation.

From the 1970s through 2022, the main road (Sturgeon Lake Road) connecting the East and West subdivisions was made of gravel. In Fall 2022, Sturgeon Lake Road was finally paved making it much easier and safer for traffic to navigate. The road has narrow shoulders making it difficult and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists given the speed and volume of traffic.

The history of Sturgeon Lake First Nation is reflected in the ATP through the following actions:

- recognition and protection of the key historic pathways in the community
- linking together the key historic pathways with cultural and practical destinations
- honouring our ancestors and the Creator
- providing opportunities to tell our story and pass along key teachings
- identifying solutions to those issues preventing people of all levels of mobility from moving through the community in a safe and efficient manner.

3 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

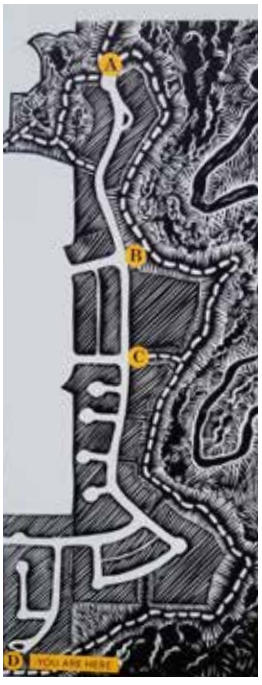
The ATP will introduce some terminology that may require explanation to make sure everyone interprets the language the same way. The following terms are defined below to help interpret the Plan:

- Multi-use pathway: a pathway that is intended to accommodate users, including pedestrians, cyclists and small-wheel users.

- Bicycle facility: any path or furniture intended for cyclists, including bike lanes and bike racks.

- Route: is a path used for active transportation and can be either paved or in a natural state.

- Network: is the collection of routes that all work together to help people move throughout the community.



4 STUDY PROCESS AND WORK PLAN

4.1. Study Background and Project Steering Committee

In early 2023, Casa Boldt Consulting was hired to work with Sturgeon Lake First Nation to prepare an ATP for their community. The first step for the consulting team was to develop a work plan that would guide the project. In March 2023, the project team met with Chief and Council to formally kick-off the ATP project, and present the proposed scope of work and timeline for consideration. The work plan received the support of Chief and Council, with a few amendments, which marked the kick-off of the ATP project.

The consulting team worked with the Special Project's Coordinator to establish a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The purpose of the PSC was to guide and direct the project and play a direct role in the development of the new ATP. The PSC helped determine where transportation routes would go, how to improve safety, what facilities are needed, and how the future work is prioritized to build out the new Plan.

The PSC was made up of five community members and including an Elder, a member of the Lands Committee, a Youth member, and at least one member from each of the East and West subdivision, as well as the Special Project's Coordinator and the consulting team. Three meetings were held with the PSC to review material, provide feedback, and make decisions about study content and process.

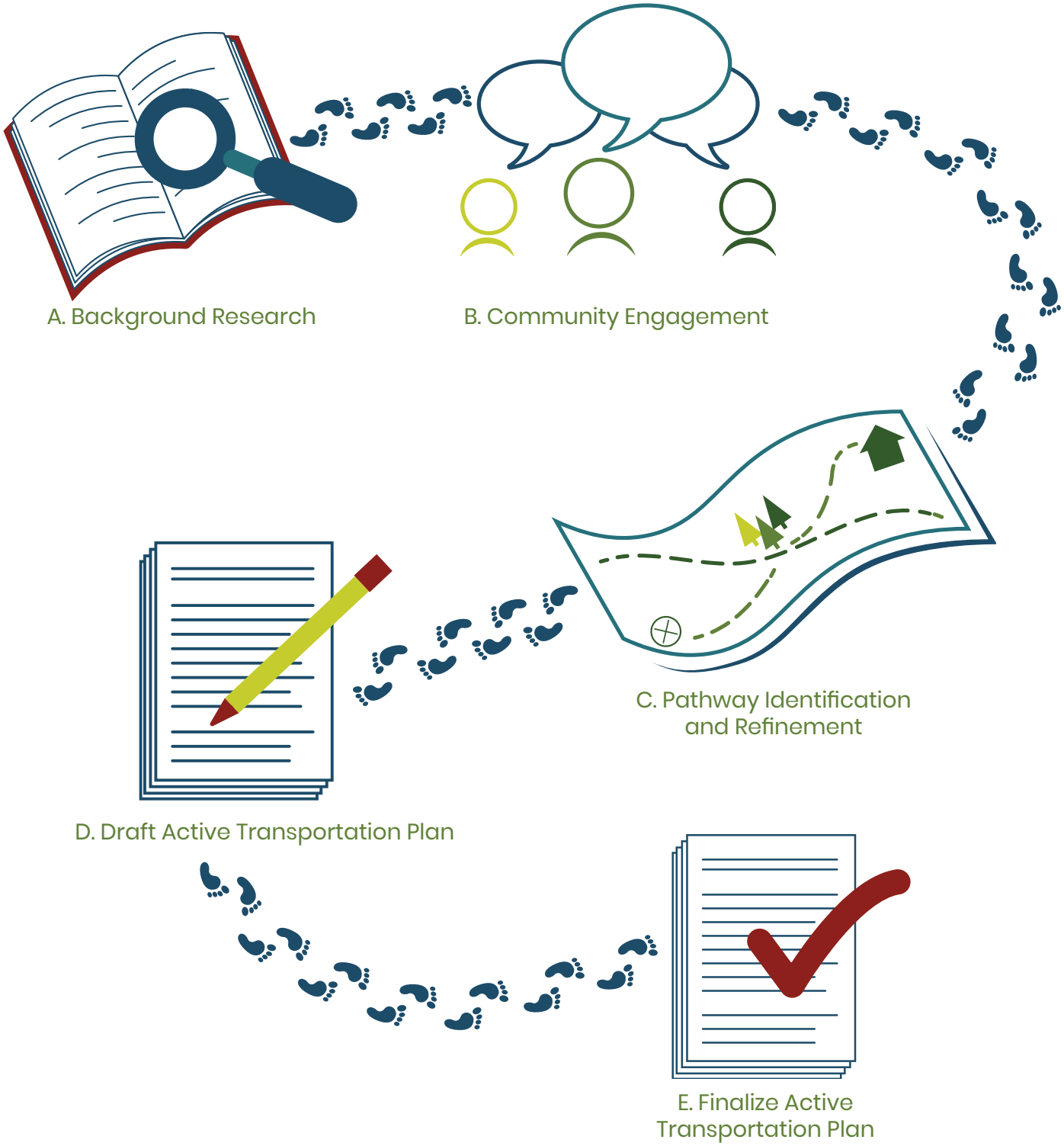
At the first meeting, held in May 2023, the PSC reviewed the work plan and discussed their role in the project. A Project Champion was appointed, and their role was to act as the local lead on the project. The Project Champion helped the project succeed by ensuring stakeholders were informed and satisfied throughout the project, as well as assisted in the coordination of meetings and distributing information.

In July 2023, a second meeting was held with the PSC. The purpose of the meeting was to review mapping of the area, begin identifying pathways, discuss and confirm the engagement plan, review types of pathways and corridors we can consider, and discuss how the ATP will function in the community. Outcomes from the meeting led to the draft active transportation routes that would be presented to the community for input.

In September 2023, a third Steering Committee meeting was held to present the findings from the engagement efforts, and discuss the opportunities, challenges and solutions that will form the ATP. The proposed routes and pathways were also presented to the PSC, and direction was given to prepare the ATP on the basis of these routes and pathways.

4.2. Work Plan

The approved work plan to undertake the ATP involved five distinct phases, all of which were guided by the PSC. The work plan involved the following phases:


A. Background Research
B. Community Engagement
C. Pathway Identification and Refinement
D. Draft Active Transportation Plan
E. Finalize Active Transportation Plan

A. Background Research

As part of the initial phase of the study, the consulting team worked with the PSC to identify key background information including relevant reports, studies, and plans that would provide context to the ATP. Background research involved a review of the following information sources:

- Land Use Plan
- Economic Development Lands Plan
- Comprehensive Community Plan
- Amisk Adventures Study
- As-Built drawings for Meskanaw Project
- Traffic volume data
- Power distribution data for community

Following the review, it was determined there was a lack of relevant traffic data to establish a baseline understanding upon. To satisfy the absence of this data source, the consulting team undertook a traffic study focused on the volume and speed of traffic along Sturgeon Lake Road. Two locations were selected, one near the East subdivision and one near the community administrative area, where Houston Radar Armadillo Tracker units were installed to monitor speed.

B. Community Engagement

The most important component of any plan is community engagement. The first step to achieve the goal of providing safe, convenient, and efficient transportation routes is to understand where people travel within their community, as well as how they travel and what barriers and opportunities exist to achieve the ATP goals.

The consulting team and the PSC prepared a community engagement and communication strategy to specifically understand the following considerations:

- how people move through the community
- key destination points
- where conflict and unsafe areas exist along their transportation routes
- preferred pathways to support active transportation in the community
- preferred design options and amenities to be included in the final ATP
- opportunities to increase pedestrian safety throughout the community
- how members envision a pathway and trail network to support their needs
- what opportunities there are to enhance the existing pathway network that exists in the community

The Community Engagement Plan relied on a survey and public engagement event at the beginning of the project. The survey was developed in collaboration with the PSC, and consisted of 16 questions. The survey was hosted online by Survey Monkey, and hard copies were also made available.

The public engagement event was held on July 25, 2023 in conjunction with Treaty Day celebrations. The consulting team set up a booth where they engaged with community residents of all ages, and discussed the ATP and its purpose. People were encouraged to fill out the survey and participants were entered into a draw to win one of two bicycles (one youth and one adult). Outcomes from the engagement efforts directly led to the identification of pathways, and helped the consulting team and PSC understand the existing barriers to active transportation in the community.

C. Pathway Identification and Refinement

This phase involved using the background information and the key community and cultural sites identified by the community, and mapping the locations and potential routes linking these key sites. The consultant team created the base maps and refined the maps based on direction from the PSC. The final product was presented to the PSC, and the finalized routes formed the basis of the ATP.

D. Draft Active Transportation Plan

The next phase in the work plan was to draft the new ATP. The consultant team developed the draft ATP based on the findings and directions of the community engagement efforts. The ATP identifies the goals and priorities of the project, as identified by the PSC and community, identifies the key cultural and community locations, the routes to connect the locations, the facilities required to build the active transportation network, and an action plan. The ATP was then submitted to the PSC for review and discussion.

E. Finalize Active Transportation Plan

The final phase in the work plan involved taking all the of the input from the PSC and editing the draft ATP. Following this work, a final review of the drafted ATP was completed by the Steering Committee, Administration and Executive Committee, and all comments and directions were edited into what became the final ATP. Led by the Special Project's Coordinator, the consulting team and PSC presented the final ATP to Chief and Council.

5 KEY FINDINGS

5.1. Public Engagement Findings

The main engagement work involved the survey and one on one discussions held at the Treaty Day Open House event. A total of 54 people filled out the questionnaire at the Treaty Day Open House which provided valuable information that helped draft the key goals of the ATP. The one-on-one discussions with community members also helped the consulting team to better understand challenges people face when moving around their community, including the distances between subdivisions, traffic speed, and specific safety concerns.

With respect to the survey results, some questions generated fairly similar responses, which helped to set direction and develop priorities with some confidence. However, there were also some unique challenges identified, and ideas to resolve these challenges, which helped to identify community driven solutions to these challenges. The questions and results of the public surveys are provided in the Appendices.

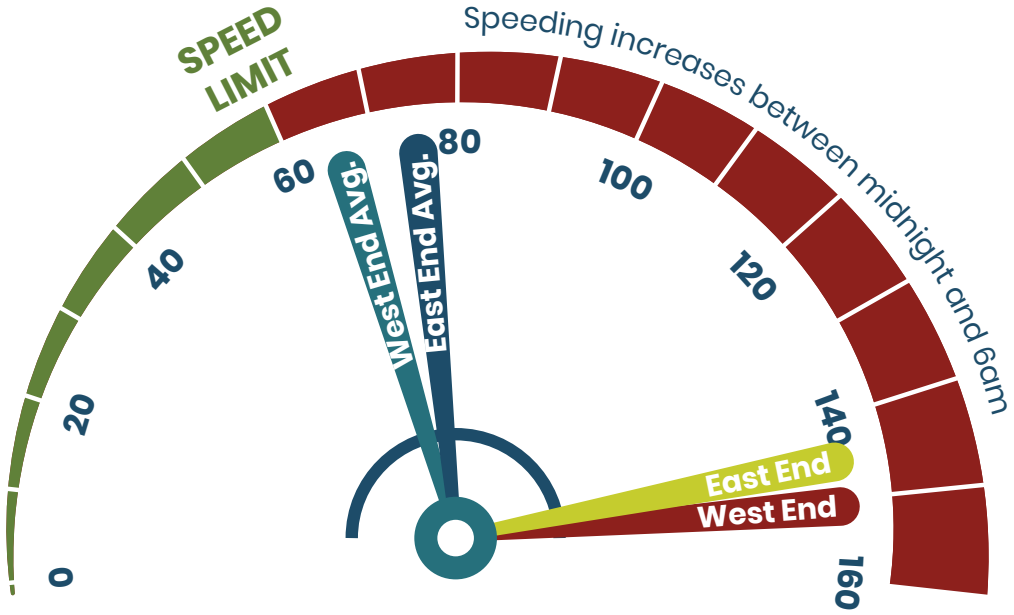
The survey identified the main barriers to active transportation within the community, which were consistent across all age groups. The greatest concern to community members was safety which can be broken down into three categories:

- traffic speeds along the main road which make walking and cycling feel unsafe
- the presence of dogs, with a couple of community members noting that have been bitten in the past
- personal safety concerns due to people who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the community (stealing bikes, hurting/intimidating people, etc.)

Although some of the safety related concerns may appear to be outside the scope of an ATP, these concerns do need to be addressed for the ATP to be successful. In order to be successful, the ATP must focus on these safety needs.

With respect to the active transportation routes and facilities, community members recommended that a sidewalk or pathway be developed along Sturgeon Lake Road to make this corridor safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Crosswalks and improved lighting were identified as being important for safety reasons. Community members also recommended additional pathways to be developed in order to encourage people to adopt active transportation options.

5.2.Traffic Study



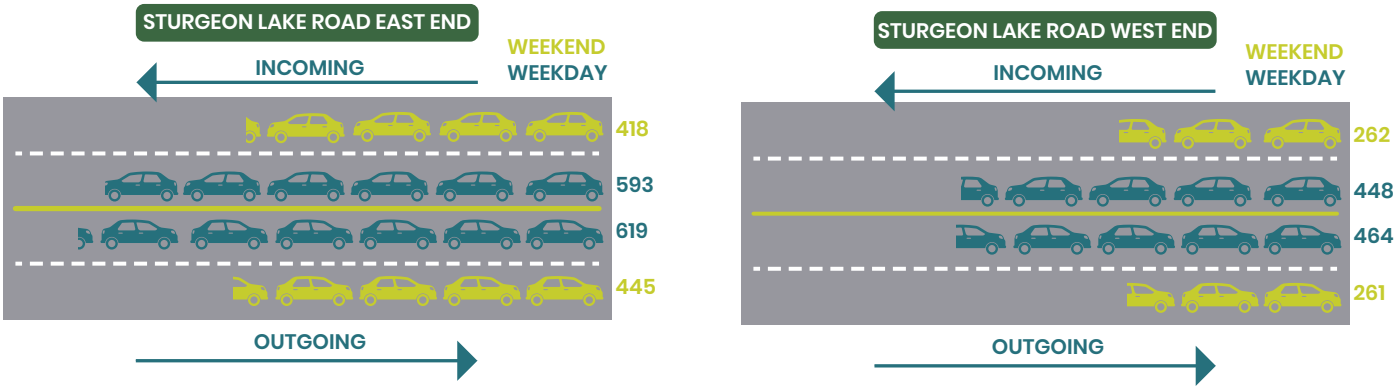
As a direct result of the traffic safety concerns noted by community members, the consultant team and Special Projects' Coordinator determined a traffic study was required to better understand the conditions along Sturgeon Lake Road.

Traffic counts along Sturgeon Lake Road were conducted between August 16 – 31, 2023. The method used to capture the data summarized in this memorandum was with a Houston Radar Armadillo Tracker installed in two locations identified as the West End (Facing East Near Elma's Beach) and the East End (Facing West Near the Bridge). The data was uploaded to a spreadsheet with an hourly synopsis that included vehicle numbers, minimum/maximum speed, average speed, and percentage of speeders. When reviewing the findings, it is important to note the speed limit along Sturgeon Lake Road is 60 km/hr in the more developed areas, 80 km/h in the rural areas, with several driveway intersections, hills and pedestrians travelling on the narrow road shoulders.

The data collected provides a comprehensive look at all vehicle information along Sturgeon Lake Road. The key findings demonstrate that speeding is a significant concern, with significantly excessive speeds recorded during early morning hours. Some key findings from the data include:

- The maximum speed recorded for the West End was 151 km/hr.
- The maximum speed recorded for the East End was 146 km/hr.
- Speeding more prevalent during the hours of midnight to 6am.
- The average speed adjusted for all hours and days of recording was 67.37 km/hr for the West End traffic, and 75.45 for the East End traffic.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES



Traffic volumes along Sturgeon Lake Road East End (West of Bridge on south side facing West) ranged from:

- 593 incoming weekday daily average
- 418 incoming weekend daily average
- 619 outgoing weekday daily average
- 445 outgoing weekend daily average

Traffic volumes along Sturgeon Lake Road West End (Facing East Near Elma's Beach) ranged from:

- 448 incoming weekday daily average
- 262 incoming weekend daily average
- 464 outgoing weekday daily average
- 261 outgoing weekend daily average

Chief and Council presented the results of the Traffic Data to the local RCMP detachment, and discussed the findings. This information will assist the RCMP to focus their traffic enforcement efforts. Ongoing dialog between the Chief and Council, and the RCMP will help to identify ways to address traffic speeds.

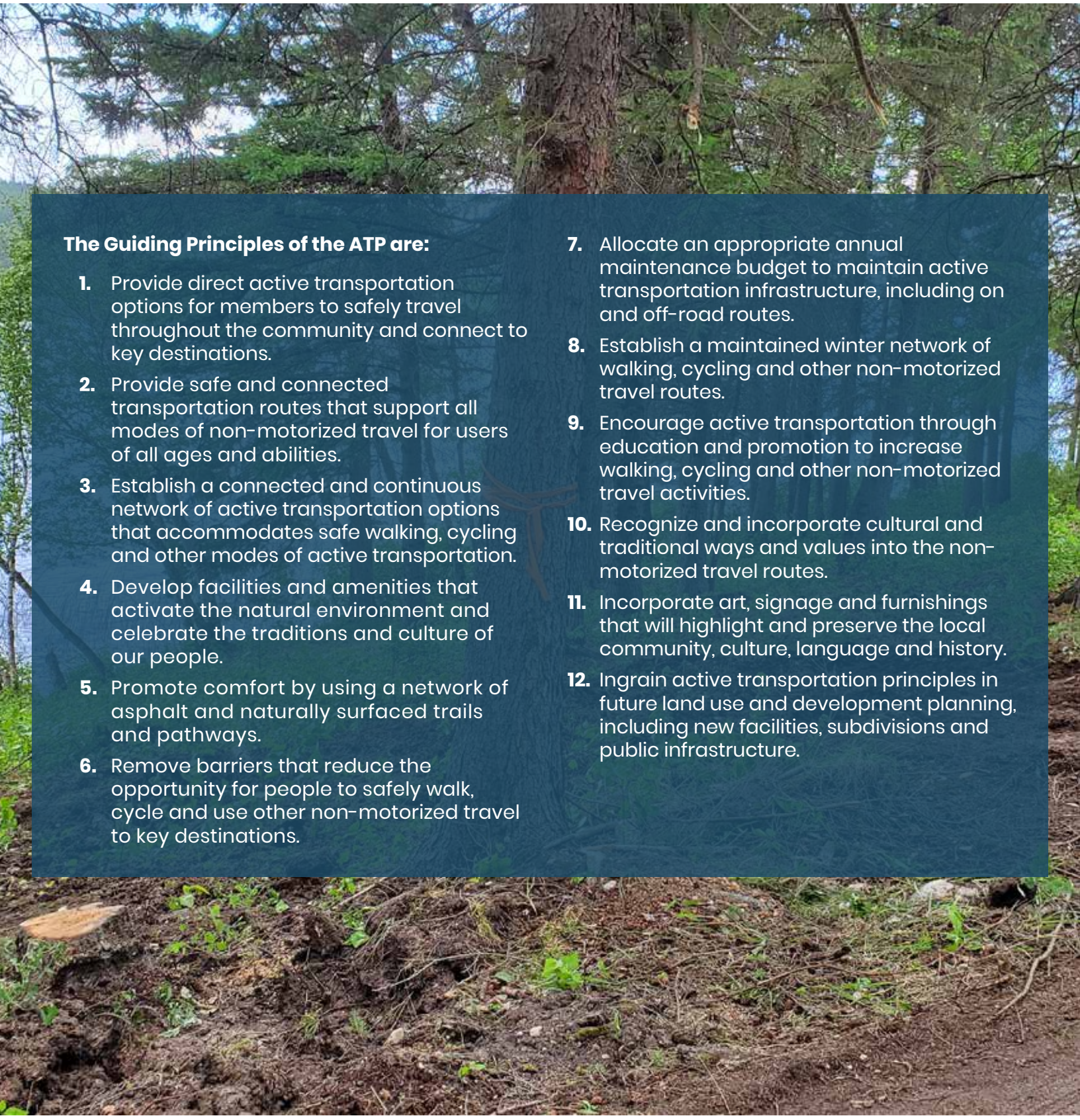
6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles for the ATP are the goals and values of the Plan. The purpose of the Guiding Principles is to provide big-picture direction that help make decisions and set priorities. Each Guiding Principle is important on its own, but together they form the complete guide that creates the ATP.

Guiding Principles for the ATP may address such things as:

- making sure everyone in the community has the ability to walk, cycle or use walkers/ wheelchairs to move around
- connect or provide access to all of the key destinations
- connecting all the pathways and roads to form a network
- making sure transportation options are safe and comfortable
- maintaining pathways to a high standard
- address transportation in winter
- provide education opportunities about the community, its traditional values and history

The Guiding Principles for the ATP were developed with the PSC and were based on direction from the public consultation efforts, and vetted through the community to ensure they reflect the goals and values of Sturgeon Lake First Nation. All policies and directions of the ATP must address and help achieve the direction of the Guiding Principles.



The Guiding Principles of the ATP are:

1. Provide direct active transportation options for members to safely travel throughout the community and connect to key destinations.
2. Provide safe and connected transportation routes that support all modes of non-motorized travel for users of all ages and abilities.
3. Establish a connected and continuous network of active transportation options that accommodates safe walking, cycling and other modes of active transportation.
4. Develop facilities and amenities that activate the natural environment and celebrate the traditions and culture of our people.
5. Promote comfort by using a network of asphalt and naturally surfaced trails and pathways.
6. Remove barriers that reduce the opportunity for people to safely walk, cycle and use other non-motorized travel to key destinations.
7. Allocate an appropriate annual maintenance budget to maintain active transportation infrastructure, including on and off-road routes.
8. Establish a maintained winter network of walking, cycling and other non-motorized travel routes.
9. Encourage active transportation through education and promotion to increase walking, cycling and other non-motorized travel activities.
10. Recognize and incorporate cultural and traditional ways and values into the non-motorized travel routes.
11. Incorporate art, signage and furnishings that will highlight and preserve the local community, culture, language and history.
12. Ingrain active transportation principles in future land use and development planning, including new facilities, subdivisions and public infrastructure.

7 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FEATURES

An Active Transportation system is made up of several types or routes, and has technical features that help guide users and keep them safe. This information is useful when considering how a route will be determined and built, and provides context to the routing decisions of the ATP.

7.1. Types of Active Transportation Routes

There are a variety of AT routes which are defined based on their location and surface characteristics. The AT routes in Sturgeon Lake First Nation will include nature routes, and routes that will be paved with asphalt or crusher dust.

A. Existing Nature Routes

Nature routes are described as those pathways that travel through nature and include open fields or through wooded areas. These routes include existing trails along Sturgeon Lake, and open spaces throughout our community.

Many of these routes will be developed with crusher dust or left as natural dirt pathways, depending upon the existing conditions and the anticipated amount of use. Given these are natural areas, the routes will be left as natural as possible and asphalt will only be introduced if crusher dust does not provide adequate accessibility and/or footing. Wooden bridges or boardwalks may be introduced in small areas and are a cost-effective alternative where pathways are difficult to cross, but efforts will be made to keep these areas as natural as possible.

B. Paved Routes

Paved routes are described as those pathways that have a hard surfacing material such as asphalt. Paved routes are typically located in areas with higher volumes of active transportation, areas that are not wooded, and on commuter routes. Paved routes encourage increased active transportation by accommodating all forms of active transportation and a comfortable surface. Paved routes also provide increased safety because they separate active transportation users from vehicles. Hard surfaced pathways also provide a higher level of accessibility for those mobility challenges. Smooth surfaces are easier for those on wheelchairs, scooters and walkers, or have difficulty navigating level changes. They also provide an opportunity for people using skateboards and rollerblades.

7.2. Signage

Signage provides valuable information. They represent rules that are in place to keep you safe, and help to communicate messages to traffic and pedestrians that can maintain order and reduce accidents. Signage is an important component of an ATP as it helps guide people to destinations, and provides information about the route, destination, and key cultural locations along the way. Signage promotes safety by helping people navigate a route and not get lost, directs people to crosswalks, and signage can advise motorists to slow down and watch for people crossing roads. There are different types of signage each with its own purpose, and combined help create a better experience for users of the routes.

A. Informational Signage

Informational signage can be located along all routes, but higher concentrations of informational signage will be developed along the naturalized routes. Informational signage will provide opportunities to present local knowledge and storytelling, and will include both English and Cree Syllabics. Informational signage will also be used to identify important cultural sites, provide educational opportunities such as identifying native plants and how they were used in traditional Indigenous livelihoods. Local artwork will also be integrated into naturalized routes, and will be done as stand-alone pieces and incorporated into informational signage wherever possible.

Locations for informational signage will be determined by the community and with the support of the consulting team. Elders will play a key role by identifying the key locations for informational signage and providing the content for the signage through their knowledge and storytelling. Informational signage and local artwork can be added along the routes at anytime, so going forward it can become a formal program to continually capture and document knowledge.

B. Directional Signage

Directional signage provides information that helps route users find their way, and keep users from getting lost or missing destinations. Directional signage is located at the beginning of trails, referred to as a Trailhead Sign; and where routes meet to help users select the correct route to reach their destination. Directional signage can also be used along routes to confirm you are going in the correct direction and can sometimes accompany informational signage to provide distance and directions. Directional signage will be used to direct people to pathways, identify shortcuts, and make sure people do not get lost, particularly when moving through the naturalized routes. Directional signage will also provide route users with information about the distance to the route destinations, and direct people of safety related features such as crosswalks.

C. Local Artwork

Local artists help tell the story of their community through their art. Local artwork reflects the values, challenges, opportunities and creativity of the community. Local artwork can be created by students to help youth become part of the storytelling, and created by community members with an interest in expressing themselves through art. Local art is also interesting and will attract people to the community to see the work which may lead to economic spin-offs. The ATP recommends that local artwork be integrated into all routes, and installed as both stand-alone pieces as well as incorporated into informational and directional signage wherever possible.

7.3. Furniture

Furniture is an important component of active transportation routes. Furniture involves a wide variety of features that are designed to improve the safety and quality of the transportation experience. Furniture includes such items as seating, garbage cans, bike racks, lighting and bollards.

A. Seating

Seating is important along longer routes to allow people to rest, but can also be located in key positions where people can pause to enjoy a nice view, or pause and reflect at a key cultural location. Seating can also be a form of artwork. Seating can be designed and built by local student or artists, and can help tell the story of the community. Seating can also use different materials; wood seating would blend into nature routes and metal seating may be better suited to areas with higher usage.

B. Garbage Cans

Garbage cans can help keep routes clean, and limit the possibilities of animals entering a route by being attracted to food or garbage. Garbage cans would be bear resistant and located in locations where people would be more apt to be eating, such as picnic and rest areas. Garbage cans may also be used as an art canvas for local students and artists.

C. Bike Racks

One purpose of an ATP is to encourage people to adopt active transportation modes, such as cycling. People will only ride their bike to a location if secure bike facilities are provided at the destination, making bike parking an important part of an ATP. Secure bike parking facilities should be located at destinations, such as the store, school, beaches

and docks. Wherever possible, bike parking should be visible from buildings to provide additional security. Secure bike parking facilities are proposed at all key route destinations.

D. Lighting

Lighting can have a positive and negative influence on safety. Lighting should be bright enough to provide direction, but no so bright that it makes it difficult to see. Lighting also suggests that an area is safe for people to travel at night, when in some cases, it may not be a safe area to travel at night due to an area being isolated or have poor traction. Lighting will be introduced along trails that are more commonly used at night, such as along Sturgeon Lake Road, and along the path to the pedestrian bridge. Lighting can be added to routes over time based on input from route users.

E. Bollards

Bollards are short posts that restrict access to a site or building. Bollards will be used in the ATP to restrict vehicles from accessing active transportation routes. In some cases, they will be used to keep small motorized vehicles such as quads, off of nature routes, and in some cases will direct vehicles to more appropriate roads. Bollards can be made of wood, concrete or metal depending upon the degree of protection required. It is anticipated that wooden bollards will be most appropriate and cost effective for the ATP.

F. Shelters

Typically referred to as bus shelters, these small structures serve a variety of purposes along active transportation routes. One key purpose is to provide shelter against poor weather, which can often occur with little notice. Shelters can also provide seating so people can rest along a route. Shelters can also be used for advertising, either to generate revenue or to advertise local events. Directional and informational signage can also be part of the shelters, including route and distance information. For security reasons, shelters are typically see-through, made of either plexiglass or metal slats so people are visible inside the shelter. A solar light could be included for additional security. Shelters could be located anywhere, but would typically be located along main routes, longer routes and at the intersections where routes meet.

G. Landscaping

Landscaping is a general term that means anything from grasses, flowers, rocks and trees. For the ATP, landscaping would not be required along most routes given many of them are through natural areas. However, in open spaces and fields, trees could be planted to provide shelter against the wind.

8 THE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Active Transportation Network is the system of trails and pathways that work together to allow people to safely walk, cycle or use other non-motorized mode to move throughout the community. Where a route is a single pathway, the network refers to all of the routes and how they fit together. The network links all of the important destinations that were identified through the public consultation efforts, and allows people to travel to all destinations using active transportation options.

The Active Transportation Network forms a key piece of the overall ATP because it identifies the routes and linkages that will be built. Due to the importance of identifying the routes and building a network of routes, the public consultation efforts focused on identifying the key destinations and asking people how they get there. The routes that form this ATP have been selected based on:

- utilizing existing trails and pathways
- needs and opportunities identified through the public consultation efforts
- locations where key facilities need improved active transportation linkages.

PRIMARY ROUTES

8.1. Active Transportation Routes

The active transportation routes that have been selected to form the network are identified below. The Routes are organized by priority and type of pathway. A map detailing the routes can be found on Appendix #3. Each route detailed below is given a number which corresponds with the same number on the map.

PRIMARY ROUTES

Primary Routes are described as those routes that will be paved with asphalt, although some sections may use crusher dust if they are located in natural areas. Primary Routes will have more people travelling on them year-round, and some of the routes will require snow clearing in winter to ensure it is safe and comfortable for active transportation. These routes will easily accommodate all forms of active transportation, including wheeled uses such as wheelchairs. Due to their overall importance for both commuting and recreation, Primary Routes will be prioritized and built out as part of the first phase of construction.

Primary Routes will require directional and informational signage to help guide users along the route and let them know how far to their destination. Primary Routes will be of varying lengths, and longer routes will include furniture, including benches and shelters. Longer routes will also provide opportunities for local artwork.

Route #1 – Paved Pathway Along Sturgeon Lake Road Between East and West Subdivisions

This route will be a 12-kilometre multiuse pathway with asphalt, that will link the East and West subdivisions. The pathway will follow Sturgeon Lake Road, but will be separated from the road. Although currently in the planning stages, it is anticipated the multiuse pathway will be located in the ditch and hillside on the south side of Sturgeon Lake Road. The pathway will be graded to make it as flat as possible, and elevated sufficiently so any water in the ditch would not flood across the pathway.

Due to the length of the route, furniture will be installed to help make the trip more comfortable. Furniture will include benches so people can rest along the route, and shelters so people can protect themselves in bad weather. Directional signage will be located along the route to help people navigate the route and to advise them of how far to their destination. Informational signage and local artwork may be located along the route to provide a more interesting route and help promote the local art and culture. Crosswalks will be installed at key points along the route, including both ends of the route so people can safely cross Sturgeon Lake Road from the East and West subdivisions.

During engagement events, one of the biggest concerns of community members was the safety of people walking, cycling and wheeling along Sturgeon Lake Road. The Traffic Study also revealed that the majority of vehicles speed along the road, and some vehicles travel at extremely high rates of speed. With a very narrow shoulder, and high rates of speed, walking, cycling or wheeling along the road can be dangerous and uncomfortable. For this reason, priority will be given to develop this route as soon as possible.

Route #2 – Store to East Subdivision

This route involves the short-cut between the store and the East subdivision. The portion of the route between the store and the eastern edge of the subdivision is in a naturalized area and crosses the Sturgeon River. This pathway will be developed with asphalt paving. The portion of the route travelling within the subdivision area will be developed as part of Phase 1 construction.

A key aspect of this route is a new pedestrian bridge that crosses Sturgeon Lake River. This crossing was identified as a high priority during consultation events. Currently, people traverse the river walking along rocks and any debris that people have used to help cross the river. A pedestrian bridge is scheduled to be installed in 2024, and a paved pathway will be developed on either side of the pedestrian bridge, with a total length of 1.5 kilometers. Solar lighting will be installed along this route to help people navigate the route at night. Bollards will be installed at the ends of pedestrian bridge to minimize any conflicts on the bridge that would occur between ATV's and pedestrians/cyclists.

Route #3 – East Subdivision to New Subdivision

This route involves an asphalt pathway running north and south that would connect the existing East subdivision with the future new subdivision, located south of Sturgeon Lake Road. This pathway will include a controlled pedestrian crossing with crosswalk paint to help people cross Sturgeon Lake Road. This route will also connect to Primary Route #1 so both subdivisions will have a direct paved connection to this main pathway along Sturgeon Lake Road. Primary Route #2 and

SECONDARY ROUTES

#3 will also meet at the crosswalk meaning people could travel from the store to the West subdivision using Primary Routes.

SECONDARY ROUTES

Secondary Routes are key routes in natural areas. Most pathways will be left as natural dirt paths, but some portions of the pathways that are used more frequently may receive crusher dust treatments. These routes are a mixture of commuter and recreational pathways. Most of these routes are existing, but some will need improvements to the path to help make them more accessible for everyone. These routes may also benefit from furniture installations, particularly the longer routes. Given these routes are existing and do not require a lot of surface treatments, they will not be the first priority for the ATP, and can be upgraded over time.

Route #4 - Lakeshore Trail from Amisk to East Subdivision

This key route involves the existing natural trail through the wooded area between Amisk and the East Subdivision, where it connects to the western most point of Route #1. The Lakeshore Trial is a scenic route following the southern shore of Sturgeon Lake and allows for recreational walks in nature with frequent lookouts of the lake. More importantly, this route provides access to key cultural sites, including the sacred circle and Old Chief's Burial Site, and to areas used to teach traditional skills such as fishing, drying meat, trapping and preparing animal hides.

The western destination of the route is the Amisk cultural site. Amisk is an important cultural and educational destination in the community. The site has picnic areas, a playground, cabins and docks that provide access to Sturgeon Lake. A new cultural centre is being planned for the site, which will make the site even more significant and draw even more people to the site, demonstrating the need to provide improvements to the route.

Directional signage will be installed at the end points to advise users of the distance to key locations along the route. Additional directional signage will be installed along the route to help direct people along the trail, and at trail intersections to direct people to the different destinations along the route. Seating will be provided at regular intervals along the route, and at key cultural and educational destinations. Additional seating can be added over time, and local pieces are encouraged, including benches and other amenities constructed by youth.

The length of the trail provides tremendous opportunities for informational signage and local art installations. Informational signage will be provided at key points along the trail and will help tell the stories and history of the area and its people. Informational signage will be used to identify important plants, explain their purpose and how they are used in traditional medicines. Text will be provided in English, Cree and Syllabics.

Some trail improvements may be required along the route to ensure it's safe and free from fallen trees. Given this is a natural trail, ongoing maintenance may be required to clear the path and keep the footpath free of roots and other trip hazards. The Lakeshore Trail will link with other routes to provide a natural pathway from Amisk cultural centre to the East Subdivision, the store and the Eastern endpoint of Route #1.

Route #5 - Amisk Cultural Loop

This route is a secondary loop that links the Old Chief's Burial site with the Kiseputinak Historical Site on the south side of Sturgeon Lake. The Amisk Cultural Loop is accessible from the Lakeshore Trail (ie. Route #4) and a short secondary link connecting to the multi-use pathway (ie. Route #1). The loop is approximately 1 kilometre in length and is at the top of the hill from the Lakeshore Trail.

The Kiseputinak Historical Circle was created as a permanent commemoration of the leadership of Sturgeon Lake First Nation. The Kiseputinak Historical Circle honors the sixty-four Headmen / Councillors who served the Nation from the date of signing Treaty No. 6 in 1876 to the end the year 2000. It is Headman O SOW-AS KO-NIKIK, one of the Headman who signed Treaties, is buried there. Councillor Robert Ermine was also later to rest there. Sixty- four rocks encircle the Chiefs' Cairn. Each rock honors one of those Headmen/ Councillors, who served during those years. We honor their courage, the progress made, the struggles and hardships they faced and we say thank you for your work well done."

A Veterans monument that commentates the veterans from SLFN, is in the same area. Not too far away, is a circle of rocks that commentate the visit from relatives of the Orkney Islands. The Historical Circle was created for both educational purposes and as a point of interest to those visiting our First Nation.

Route #6 - School to West Subdivision

This secondary route provides an asphalt paved pathway for youth traveling from the West subdivision to the school. This route connects near the endpoint of the Route #1

CONNECTOR ROUTES

multiuse pathway, so together these routes can connect the East subdivision through to the school. The West subdivision is on the North side of Sturgeon Lake Road and the school is on the South side. Currently, youth taking this path must walk on the side of Sturgeon Lake Road, and at some point, cross the road. Once across the road, youth take a dirt path developed by pedestrian desire lines over the years, across a field to the school.

This route is proposed to be upgraded in phases, with the first phase addressing the safety concerns of crossing Sturgeon Lake Road. At least one crosswalk is proposed to help youth cross the road, and additional signage advising drivers of the crosswalk and reminding them youth are travelling along the road. Future upgrades may provide a wider shoulder on Sturgeon Lake Road, or a separate multiuse trail to provide safer active transportation along this stretch of the route.

The portion of trail that crosses the field would benefit from improved landscaping, such as a row of trees being planted along the west side of the trail to help block the wind. The surface treatment on this portion of the trail is currently packed dirt, but will be upgraded in time to asphalt paving to help make the route more comfortable and encourage more active transportation along this route.

Route #7 - West Graveyard Loop

This route is an approximately one-kilometre loop south of Sturgeon Lake Road close to the main administration area. This route currently exists as a dirt road that provides access to the West graveyard. Both ends of this loop have direct access to the Route #1 multiuse pathway and will provide improved

connections to the graveyard from all areas of the community. The West Graveyard Loop will be upgraded with directional signage to help people navigate to the site, and informational signage to provide the history of the gravesite. Seating could be added along the route to provide an opportunity for people to pause and reflect, and providing a place to rest while traversing the hillside.

CONNECTOR ROUTES

Connector routes are small trails between destinations, or connect primary and secondary routes. Given these routes tend to be short distances, they typically do not require a lot of attention or furniture along the route. However, these routes may benefit from treatments at the destination points.

Route #8 - Paved Pathway to Old Chief's Burial Site

This route provides a connection from the paved multiuse pathway (Route #1) to the Old Chief's Burial site and Kiseputinak Historical Circle. The site can also be reached from the Lakeshore Trail (Route #4), but this route provides an accessible access to this key cultural site from near the midpoint of the multiuse pathway.

A portion of this route will run parallel with a driveway to a home near the Old Chief's Burial site, so it will be important to identify the trail and keep it passable year-round to keep people from trespassing. Directional signage will be required at the entry point along the multiuse pathway (Route #1). Seating may be an option at the Old Chief's Burial Site and Kiseputinak Historical Circle to provide an opportunity for people to pause and reflect. Informational signage should also be provided at this important cultural site.

Route #9 - Store to Myosees Beach

This route connects the destinations of the store and Myosees Beach located at the East end of Sturgeon Lake. The sandy beach has a small playground, signage and large beach area for relaxing. The route travels across some open fields crosses a road and past the old burial site. The route will follow the existing dirt pathway, which could be upgraded to crusher dust over time. A trailhead sign will be installed at the store to direct people to Myosees Beach. Bike parking facilities could be provided at both ends of this trail, and informational signage could be considered for the old burial site.

Route #10 – Amisk to Paved Pathway

This route connects Amisk cultural site with the paved pathway (Route #1). This route follows the existing dirt road from Sturgeon Lake Road to the Amisk site. This route has a fairly steep grade change, so future efforts may be needed to regrade, or provide a switchback to make the trip up and down the hill more comfortable. Amisk signage already exists at the access point on Sturgeon Lake Road, however directional signage should be added to the paved pathway (Route #1) to guide users to the Amisk connector route.

Route #11 - School and Band Office to Paved Pathway

This route connects the school and band office to the paved pathway through the open fields South-East of the Arbour. This route provides a shortcut to the paved pathway from the school and band office. For the short-term, this route

WATER ROUTES

will be an informal route that will remain as a dirt path. When new facilities are constructed, including a new Arbour, arena and office buildings, this route may need to be rerouted. At that time, the route will be upgraded to provide improved surface treatments and furniture.

WATER ROUTES

The ATP also envisions water routes as part of the overall active transportation network. Canoeing and kayaking are traditional modes of transportation in Indigenous history and culture and this is an important component of the ATP. Sturgeon Lake has also been identified as an excellent lake for rowing competitions. Sturgeon Lake First Nation has hosted two major rowing events on the lake, including the 1999 Western Canada Summer Games and the international CanAmMex Rowing Regatta event held in July 2001. The rowing lanes used in these competitions remain in the lake, but would likely need to be replaced for future events.

During public engagement events, community members discussed the significance of water in their culture and noted a lack of canoeing and kayaking opportunities exist for youth. Community members suggested improved docks, additional canoes and kayaks, formal training programs, a canoe/kayak club, and hosting races on Sturgeon Lake would help youth to connect with the water and learn traditional skills.

The Amisk cultural site has a small dock, but it is envisioned that the site would construct a larger and functional dock to compliment the proposed upgraded cultural centre. This would make Amisk the logical focus of the water routes. The water routes are envisioned to be a launch point to the beaches. The Amisk

site has direct access to the multiuse pathway (Route #1) using the Amisk connector pathway (Route #10); and is located at the trailhead to the Lakeside Trail (Route #4). These connections mean the water routes are directly linked to the two main active transportation routes, making the water routes a viable and important part of the active transportation network.

During the winter months, the water routes will remain part of the AT network because they can accommodate walking, snowshoeing and cycling. Ice fishing, skating and cross-country skiing are also popular activities on frozen lakes and the AT network will help community members to have improved access to the lake for these winter activities.

Route #12 – Amisk to Myosees Beach

This water route connects the Amisk cultural site with Myosees Beach, which is located at the East end of Sturgeon Lake. Myosees Beach has a gradual slope into the lake making it an easy and convenient location to launch a canoe or kayak. The trip from Amisk to Myosees Beach follows the south shoreline, keeping canoes and kayaks close to shore. A future dock could be located south of Myosees Beach and would provide direct access to the East subdivision. This site would benefit from a canoe/kayaking locking facility so people could lock their boat and continue on to the store, sports grounds or East subdivision.

Route #13 – Amisk to Elma Beach

Similar to Route #12, this water route links the Amisk cultural site with Elma's Beach, which is located to the West near the main administrative areas and school. Elma's Beach is smaller than Myosees Beach, but also has a playground and sandy beach area that provides a good launch point for canoes and kayaks. Given its close proximity to Sturgeon Lake Road, a connector route is not required. Directional signage identifying Elma's Beach from the paved pathway would be needed to help guide people to the beach area. The Elma's Beach area site would also benefit from a canoe/kayaking locking facility so people could lock their boat and continue on to the administrative area, arbour, or school.

FUTURE ROUTES

The ATP is envisioned to be a living document where additional routes can be added over time. There are several new developments proposed for the community in the coming years, including a new arbour, arena and administrative buildings. A new subdivision is also proposed at the South-East end of Sturgeon Lake First Nation. As these developments build out, additional active transportation routes, connecting routes and facilities, including crosswalks and lights, may be needed to help people move through the community. Connecting new developments and facilities proposed throughout the community to the AT network will be important to promote and enhance active transportation and ensuring equitable access is provided to Sturgeon Lake members.

Future routes may include a pathway that follows the old road, south of Sturgeon Lake Road, linking the new subdivision to the Amisk cultural site, and linkages to other culturally significant areas of the community. Additional connector routes may be needed in the future to link the paved pathway to new homes and subdivisions, and link the proposed new developments.

9 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The ATP also recommends educational programs be implemented to help youth and adults alike get exposure to new activities and learn now to safely participate in these activities. Education programs would rely on volunteers to help establish and provide training to newcomers to the activities. These volunteers will need help to get started, including financial assistance to purchase equipment such as bicycles, canoes, kayaks, and secure storage facilities. The school could incorporate these activities and educational opportunities into their curriculum.

The education programs can lead to the creation of interest groups, where people of similar interests and skill levels can get together to pursue activities together. For instance, youth and adult kayakers could have scheduled times to meet to paddle together. These groups will build interest and capacity in the sport, and members can help people new to the activity learn the sport. The opportunity also exists to work with local and national rowing organizations to help return rowing regattas to Sturgeon Lake. Hiking groups, running groups, cycling groups, and people interested in nature walks can all become established. One aspect of the new Amisk facility is to host such activities, so the ATP and new facility can work together to establish, promote and host new community clubs to take advantage of the ATP routes.

9.1. Cycling Programs

Cycling programs are important to help people to not only learn to cycle, but learn to cycle safely. A cycling program would require some bicycles that could be used to help people learn to ride. The Program could also help people to learn to ride safely in off-road conditions, taking advantage of the natural areas along Sturgeon Lake. New cycling only routes could be added in the future through areas that would be designated for bicycles only to avoid conflicts with people hiking. The Administration and the school could work together to establish the cycling program, and volunteers would help with the training and educational components. The new Amisk facility would be an appropriate staging point for off-road cycling, and could provide meeting space for workshops.

9.2.Canoe/Kayak Programs

Canoeing and kayaking is an important component of the ATP, in large part to help revitalize traditional skills and bringing community members back to the water. A new dock is needed at Amisk, and new canoes and kayaks are needed. Once in place, canoe and kayak programs could operate from the new Amisk facility. Programs aimed at youth can help highlight the importance of canoes in Indigenous culture, and teach traditional methods of canoe building. Canoes and kayaks could be made available for school programs, and training provided to teach the skills needed to navigate the crafts on the water. The canoes and kayaks could be available to community members for recreational purposes. Similar to the cycling program, the canoe and kayak programs can help create clubs where people interested in the activity can get together with others and do group outings on the lake. These clubs can also organize canoe and kayak trips, and organize races bringing people from all over to the facility.

The program would need financial support to build the new dock, purchase canoes and kayaks, and a secure storage facility. The Band Administration and school could help establish the programs, and then volunteers could take over once the programs are operational.

10 PROMOTING SAFETY

During engagement events for the ATP, safety was the single biggest concern raised by community members. Safety concerns can be divided into three distinct types: traffic, dogs, and personal safety. Although some of these concerns fall outside of the scope of an ATP, for the Plan to be successful, these three concerns need to be identified and solutions offered wherever possible.

10.1. Traffic Safety

Traffic safety was a common concern raised at engagement events, and the traffic study confirmed the concerns related to vehicle speeds. Specific traffic safety concerns related to the close interaction between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists and those on small wheels travelling along Sturgeon Lake Road. People travelling on the road using active transportation means are put in close contact with vehicles. The shoulder of the road is narrow and the ditch is steep, putting people close to the driving lanes. Some vehicles were found to be driving at excessive speeds, creating very dangerous situations along the road.

To address these traffic safety concerns, the ATP proposed a number of improvements along the key routes. The first, and most important recommendation, is to construct Route #1 - the Paved Pathway along Sturgeon Lake Road Between East and West Subdivisions. This will separate vehicles from people walking, cycling or wheeling along Sturgeon Lake Road, and create a safer road for all users.

Traffic safety was also noted at specific locations along Sturgeon Lake Road, including the narrow bridge just south of the Store, the bottom of hills and at intersections. The safety concerns here relate to vehicle speeds, and short sight lines. The bridge narrows and is on the bend of the road, making it difficult for vehicles to see people on the bridge, and little room for error due to the bridge width. To address these safety issues, the ATP has identified locations for pedestrian activated crosswalks and additional signage warning drivers of crosswalks ahead. The ATP also recommends an engineering study be done to determine whether an asphalt sidewalk could be added to the outside of the bridge allowing people to cross the bridge safely. These actions will make the road safer for all users.

The ATP also recommends that some traffic calming measures be implemented along Sturgeon Lake Road to help slow traffic at key locations. These traffic calming measures potentially include speed bumps, additional signage and lighting at intersections and crosswalks. Increased traffic speed enforcement by the RCMP will also help reduce speeds. The Traffic Study data, and input from community members identifying the more dangerous locations where people speed, will help the RCMP focused their efforts and address safety at key locations.

Although managing vehicle speeds is outside of the scope of the ATP, the improvements recommended in the ATP combined with additional efforts to address traffic speeds, including more speed enforcement by the RCMP, will significantly improve safety along Sturgeon Lake Road.

10.2. Dogs

During engagement activities for the ATP, reserve dogs were mentioned by the majority of people as a key barrier to active transportation. Some people mentioned they had been bitten in the past by dogs, and others said they have been chased by dogs when they were running or riding a bike. Implementation of the ATP may lead to even further conflicts between dogs and people.

Although the ATP has limited ability to address this concern, it was raised as a concern by a large number of respondents during engagement events. The ATP recommends this matter be discussed as a community to determine how best to proceed. Work on this project should begin with research to determine what other communities have done and see if ideas can be adopted. This is a complicated issue and will require a local solution, but must me considered in order for the ATP to be successful.

10.3. Personal Safety

Personal safety relates to feeling safe when travelling through the community. Community members expressed concern about running into gang members or intoxicated people, whether by drugs or alcohol, when they are moving around the community. People can be vulnerable when they are alone, or on an isolated trail or road in the community, particularly after dark.

These are serious and genuine concerns raised by community members during the engagement events. When the Project Steering Committee met with RCMP about the traffic speeds, the they also advised the RCMP about the personal safety concerns identified during the engagement efforts. Although the RCMP are aware of these concerns, it was important to discuss them in context of the ATP because the Plan is intended to get even more people moving around the community leading to increased personal safety concerns.

There are some ways that the ATP can work to address personal safety. As a starting point, further work should be done to engage with members to get more details about where people feel unsafe in the community, examine crime statistics to identify public locations that may have a history of conflict, and get members' thoughts and ideas on how to address safety as they are the local experts.

The ATP also recommends that a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) study be undertaken to identify ways to improve personal safety along the routes. According to the International CPTED Association, CPTED is a "multi-disciplinary approach of crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments". A CPTED study would look at each route and offer recommendations to improve safety along the routes, which may include improving site lines, adjusting the amount of lighting, and removing hiding places. Priority should be placed on the busier routes, and any route that has been identified as a concern by community members.

If concerns about personal safety can be addressed, it will mean more people using the routes, which in turn makes the routes even more safe. For the ATP to be successful, it will be important to address personal safety along the routes. This can be achieved by working with local members to identify specific safety concerns, discussing solutions, undertaking CPTED reviews, and implementing the recommendations of these actions.

11 IMPLEMENTATION

The success of any plan comes down to the ability to implement the plan. This section will focus on priorities, potential funding sources and new programs focused on the recommendations of the ATP. All of the routes are important and need to be implemented for the ATP to be successful. However, some should be prioritized due to safety needs, and the number of people who will be using the routes. It should also be noted that the priorities can change over time due to such things as new funding programs being made available, safety issues, or specific requests from community members. The Implementation Plan is based on the current conditions and priorities can be adjusted to make sure the ATP is implemented to best meet the community's needs.

The ATP has identified 13 routes that will comprise the initial active transportation network. The highest priority routes should be implemented within three years due to their importance for both safety and transportation. The remaining routes will be prioritized based on safety, users and ease of implementation. A CPTED review should be completed for the immediate implementation routes within the 3-year implementation window.

This section will also address the health aspects of the ATP. One of the main reasons Chief and Council initiated the ATP was to improve the overall health and wellbeing of community members. To determine whether the ATP is meeting this goal, it is important to understand the existing health conditions of the community and then track changes over time.

11.1. Immediate Implementation Routes

The routes identified as the highest priority for implementation are Routes #1, #2, #3, #6, #12 and #13:

Route #1 – Paved Pathway Along Sturgeon Lake Road Between East and West Subdivisions, is seen as a priority for implementation due safety concerns with people walking and cycling along the road. The ATP proposes that a new multi-use pathway be developed in the ditch and shoulder area along Sturgeon Lake Road. This is a very large project that requires significant funding. Funding applications should be submitted as soon as possible so that engineering work can begin, funding estimates can be made so that government grants can be applied for immediately. Furnishings will also be required along the route, which would be part of the funding applications. This is a large-scale project, and will require a project manager to work with the various contractors, apply for funding, and keep Chief and Council updated on the project.

Route #2 – Store to East Subdivision, is seen as a high priority because of the safety concerns crossing the river, and the number of people who use the route. This route will be built out in phases, the first of which involves the installation of a pedestrian bridge over Sturgeon Lake River, and 1.5 kilometres of pathway to the bridge. The first phase also includes solar lighting on both banks to help guide people downhill to the bridge. Bollards are proposed to be installed at the ends of the bridges to keep motorized vehicles off the bridge deck. Funding has been secured for the first phase of construction, and additional funding will be requested to help complete the pathways. This is also a large-scale project, given there is a bridge involved, and will require

a project manager to work with the various contractors, apply for funding, and keep Chief and Council updated on the project.

Route #3 – East Subdivision to New Subdivision is a high priority route because it will help community members safely cross Sturgeon Lake Road to access the new multi-use pathway (Route #1). The new subdivision will be developed south of this location, so the pathway will also link the existing East subdivision with the new subdivision as its built out, making it even that much more important.

Route #6 – School to West Subdivision, is a high priority route because school aged youth must walk along and cross Sturgeon Lake Road on their way to school, and then cross an open field. The proposal is to either widen the shoulder of the road or continue the multi-use pathway to the West Subdivision to make the walk along the road safer. A crosswalk will be installed to provide a safe crossing, and the crosswalk will be upgraded to either a flashing light, or pedestrian activated light. The ATP proposes the pathway across the field be lined with trees along the west side to help block the wind, and the pathway itself be upgraded to crusher dust and be cleared in winter.

Routes #12 and #13 – Water Routes are seen as high priority for several reasons. It is important to the community to re-establish the tradition skills of canoeing and kayaking and help community members have improved access to the water. Canoeing and kayaking routes also provide a viable transportation option from one end of the community to the other, linking the two existing subdivisions.

The routes themselves can be easily established by adding informational and directional signage to formalize the route. There are some costs and work required to secure more canoes and kayaks and to add some new docks at Amisk to accommodate the additional canoes and kayaks. One dock currently exists at the site, but it is at its end of life and needs to be replaced. A new dock would also accommodate racing and other water events on Sturgeon Lake. Kayak racing events have been held in the past, and a new dock would help attract events to the community. The Amisk site is working to build a new Community Centre at the site, and a new dock would also help expand the educational component of the new facility. These two uses can compliment each other and help establish the site as a key recreation and education centre for local community and visitors.

11.2. Remaining Implementation Routes

Implementation of all routes is important, because they all connect to create a network of pathways. The majority of the remaining routes already exist, and their full implementation involves the addition of furniture and signage. Some of these routes may be implemented within the first three years given they may not require as much effort as other routes. The majority of these routes can be established within a short period of time, and then the furniture, art and other related pieces can be added to these routes over time. It is recommended that all directional signage be added to these routes within five years. The Administration and School can then work together to coordinate the art, furnishings and informational signage along the routes.

11.3. Community Health Assessment

As part of the Implementation Plan, it is proposed that Sturgeon Lake First Nation work with their Health Centre to prepare a current health assessment of the community. The project will rely on the knowledge of the Health Centre professionals to identify which health indicators should be included in the assessment. For instance, the assessment could measure the level of diabetes, heart disease, cancer rates and other targeted indicators recommended by the Health Centre professionals. Once the indicators have been identified, the cumulative community health data can be assessed to establish a base level. The data will be presented as the community's overall numbers, and will not identify individuals.

The community health data can then be updated annually and reported to Chief and Council to identify any changing trends.

It is important to note that Chief and Council will also initiate other actions and projects that will have a positive impact on the health of the community. For this reason, any measured health improvements in the community cannot be assumed are all related to the ATP. However, it is important to understand the impacts the collection of actions are having on the overall health and wellbeing of the community to ensure these actions are having a positive impact on the community.

11.4. Implementation Schedule

Immediate Implementation Routes (1 to 3 years)

1. **Route #1 –** Paved Pathway Along Sturgeon Lake Road Between East and West Subdivisions
2. **Route #2 –** Store to East Subdivision
3. **Route #3 –** East Subdivision to New Subdivision
4. **Route #6 -** School to West Subdivision
5. **Route #12 –** Amisk to Myosees Beach
6. **Route #13 –** Amisk to Elma's Beach

Remaining Routes (3 to 5 years)

7. **Route #4 -** Lakeshore Trail from Amisk to East Subdivision
8. **Route #5 -** Amisk Cultural Loop
9. **Route #7 -** West Graveyard Loop
10. **Route #8 -** Paved Pathway to Old Chief's Burial Site
11. **Route #9 -** Store to Myosees Beach
12. **Route #10 –** Amisk to Paved Pathway
13. **Route #11 -** School and Band Office to Paved Pathway

12 CONCLUSION

The Sturgeon Lake Active Transportation Plan is the result of the efforts from many people, including Chief and Council, the Project Steering Committee, consulting team, and most importantly, the community members. The ATP set out to ensure everyone, regardless of age and mobility, is able to travel safely and efficiently through the community. The ATP also recognizes and addresses the unique challenges and aspects of the community, including the distance between subdivisions and safety issues along Sturgeon Lake Road.

Through the implementation of the ATP, active mobility between subdivisions will become safer and more comfortable, and will encourage some members who normally drive to try more active transportation options. The ATP leverages the new multiuse pathway linking the subdivisions to provide improved access to naturalized woodland areas, key cultural areas including the Amisk Cultural site, and to the beaches and lake. This leads to more active and healthier lifestyles and creates more opportunities for social interaction among community members. The water routes included in the ATP will help promote traditional canoe/kayaking transportation among community members and visitors. Integrating local art, furniture and other amenities along the routes will link the transportation network to the Nêhiyaw (Cree) culture and help the membership take ownership of their community.

With the ATP now in place, the real work begins. Implementation of the ATP will require continued efforts by Chief and Council, the Administration and community members. The dedication taken to prepare the ATP, efforts to secure funding for phase 1 of pathway construction and the new pedestrian bridge, and the completion of the Meskanaw Project which saw the paving of the new Sturgeon Lake Road demonstrates Sturgeon Lake First Nation is committed to improving active mobility in the community and will successfully recognize the benefits of their new Active Transportation Plan.

> *Our people used this trail for many years. It was those trails & roads that held our families and communities together.*
>
> *Lakeshore Trail sign*

APPENDICES

Appendix #1

Community Survey and Results

Appendix #2

Route Maps

Appendix 1

Community Survey and Results

Sturgeon Lake First Nation

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

STURGEON LAKE FIRST NATION

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Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

*Our first engagement event was the public Open House on July 25, 2023.

*54 people filled out the questionnaire.

*One-on-one discussions with community members helped us to better understand challenges people face when moving though the community.

*Some questions generated fairly similar responses, which helps to set direction and develop priorities.

*There were also several unique ideas and challenges identified, which helped to find community driven solutions.

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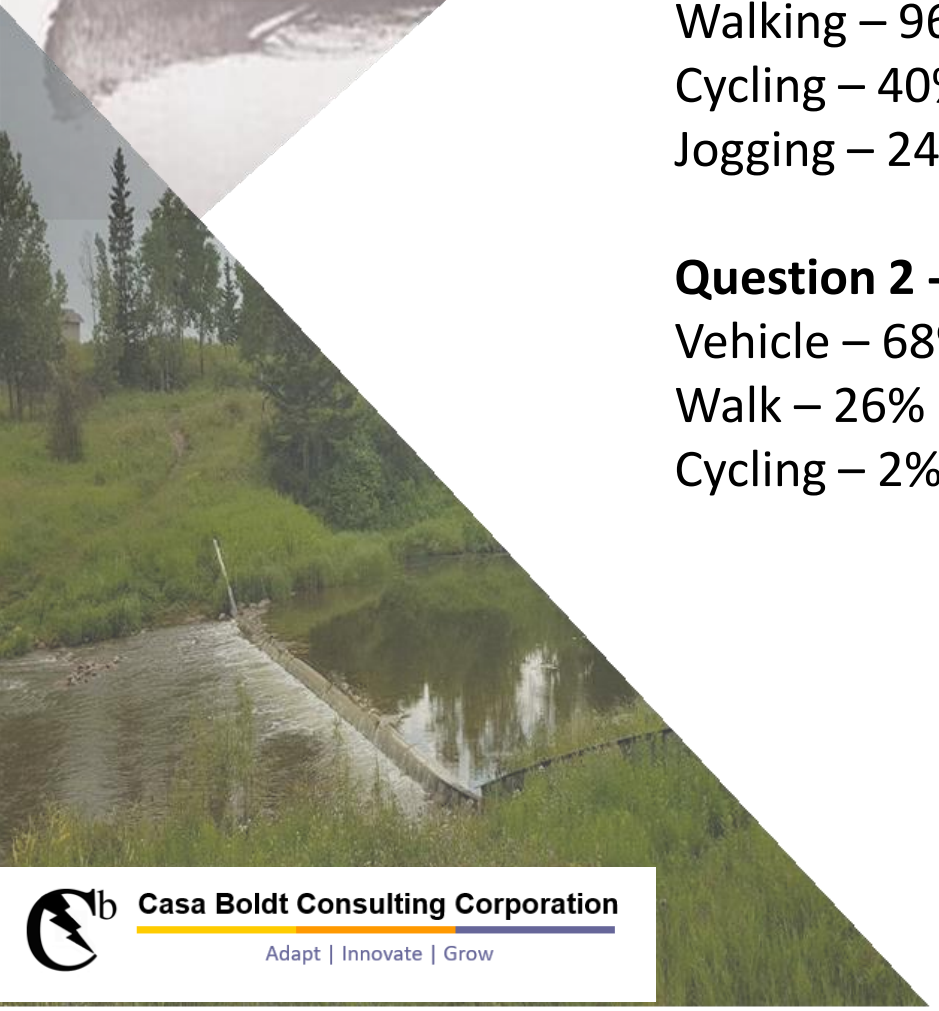

Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1 – Regular Forms of Transportation:
Walking – 96%
Cycling – 40%
Jogging – 24%

Question 2 - Primary Mode of Transportation
Vehicle – 68%
Walk – 26%
Cycling – 2%

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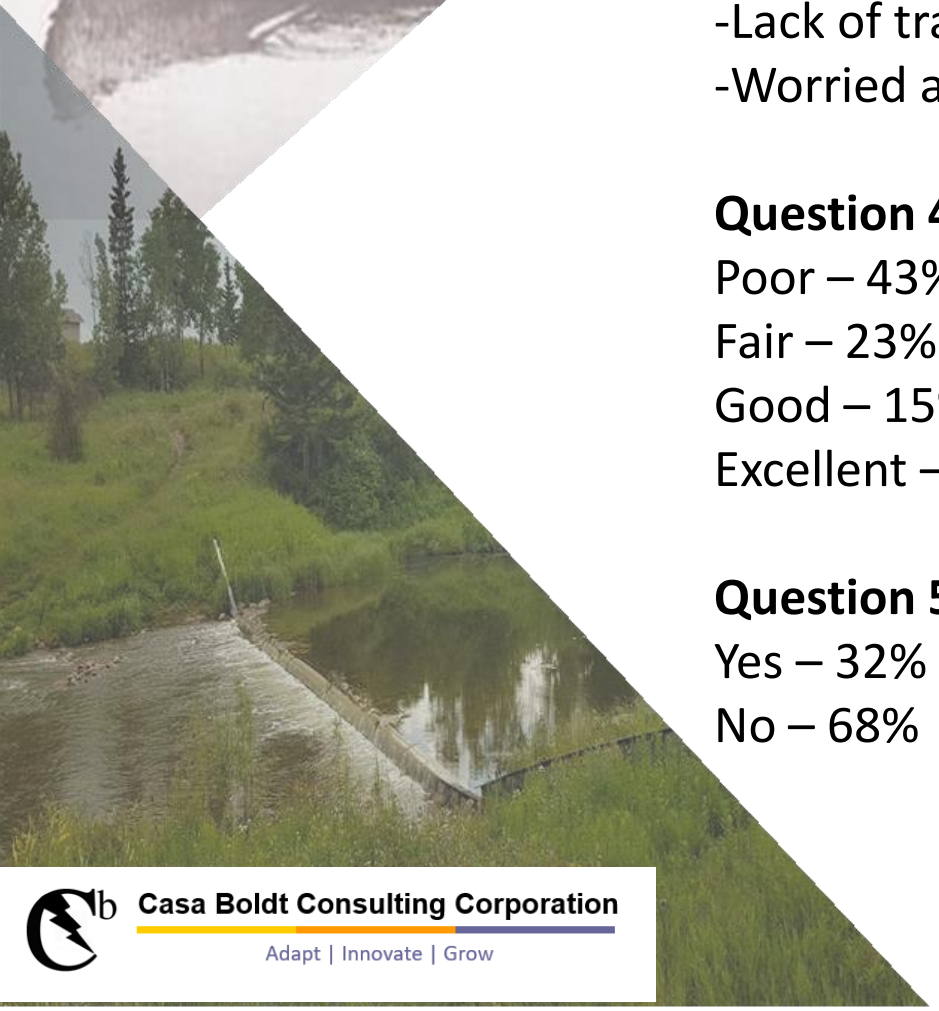


Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

Question 3 – What prevents you from walking or cycling more? (open ended)

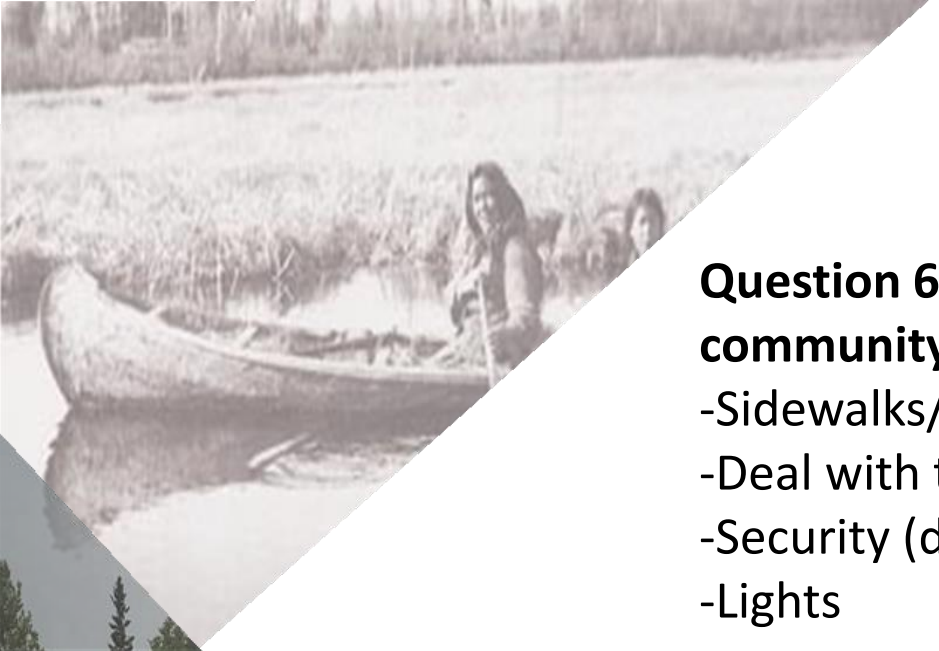
-Safety (traffic, dogs, people)
-Lack of trails and sidewalks
-Worried about bike thefts

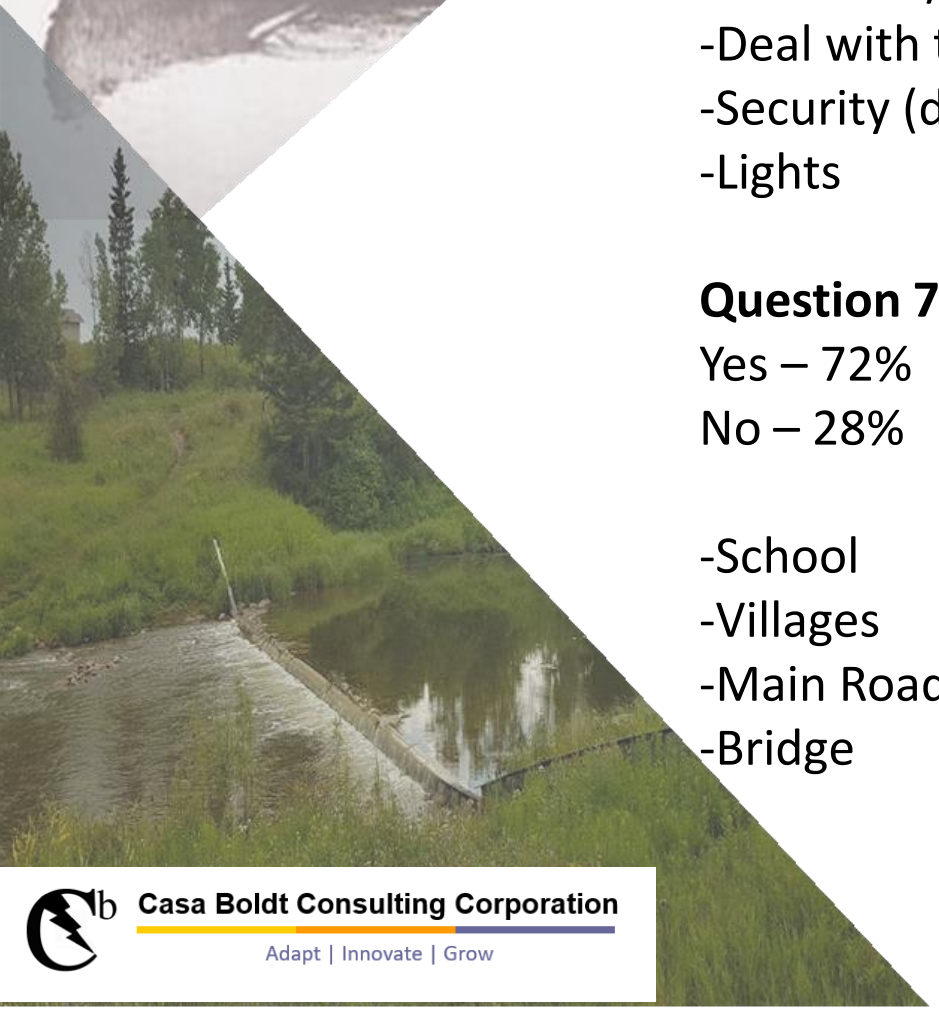
Question 4 - How would you rate the ability to walk or cycle in the community?

Poor – 43%
Fair – 23%
Good – 15%
Excellent – 19%

Question 5 - Do you think the community is safe to walk or bike?

Yes – 32%
No – 68%





Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

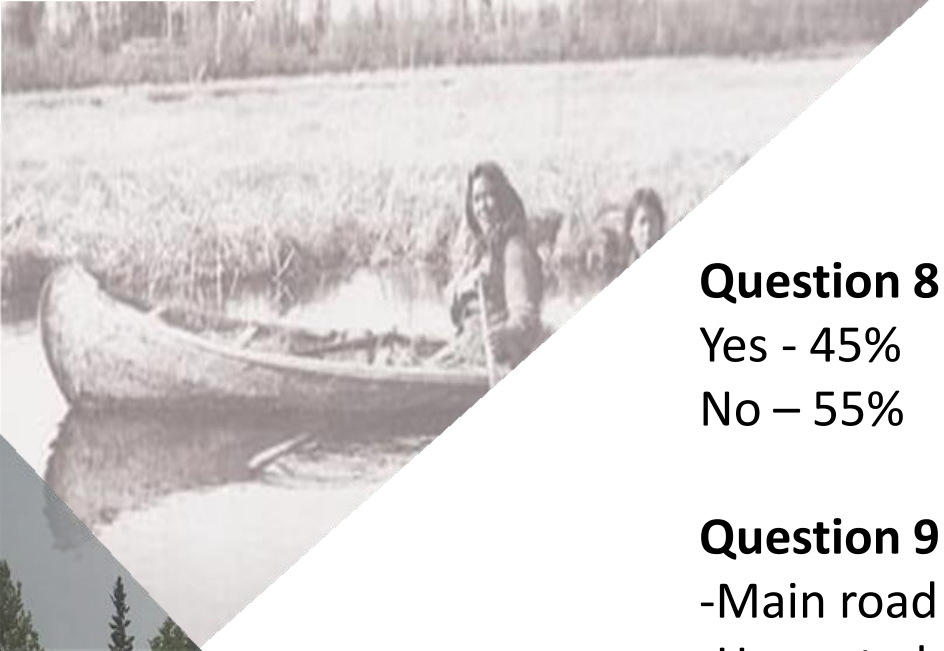
Question 6 – How could we improve the safety of walking and biking in the community?

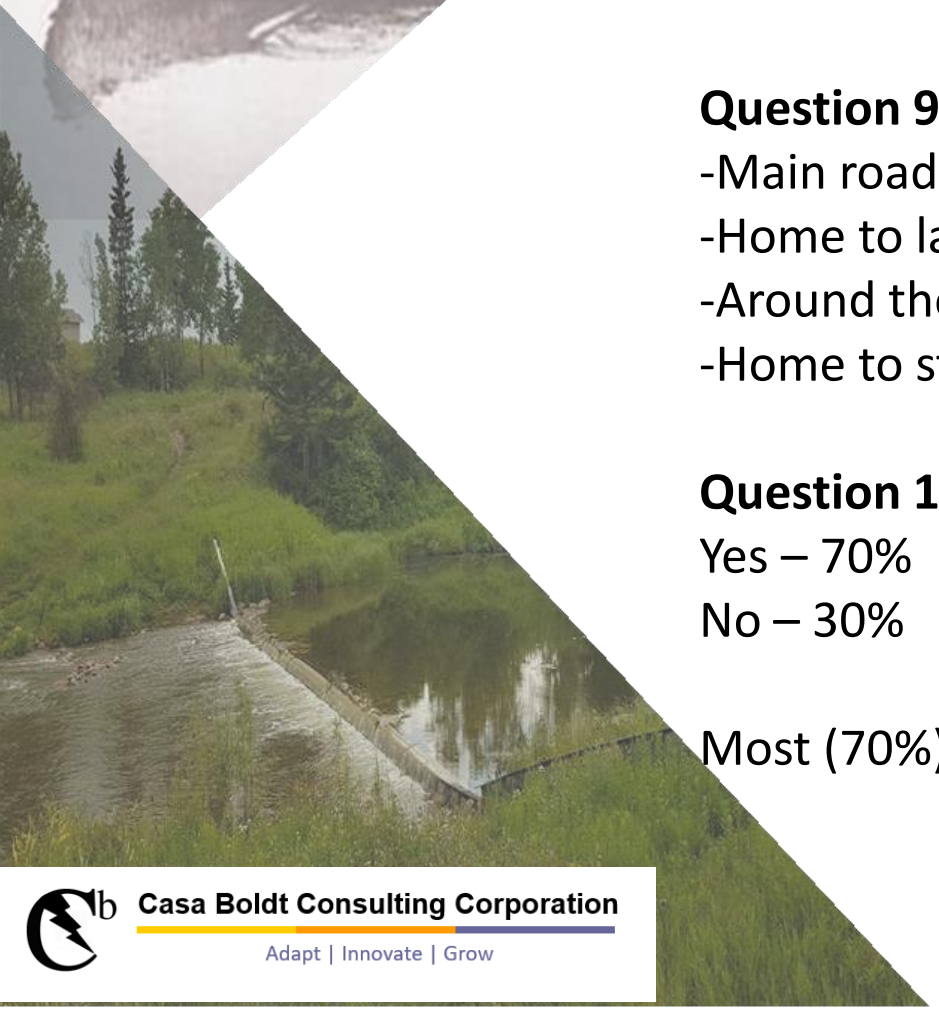
-Sidewalks/Trails
-Deal with the dogs
-Security (drugs, traffic)
-Lights

Question 7 - Are there any locations where you would like to see crosswalks?

Yes – 72%
No – 28%

-School
-Villages
-Main Road
-Bridge





Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

Question 8 – Do you use the paths in the community?

Yes - 45%

No – 55%

Question 9 - What are the most common routes where you walk or cycle?

-Main road

-Home to lake

-Around the villages

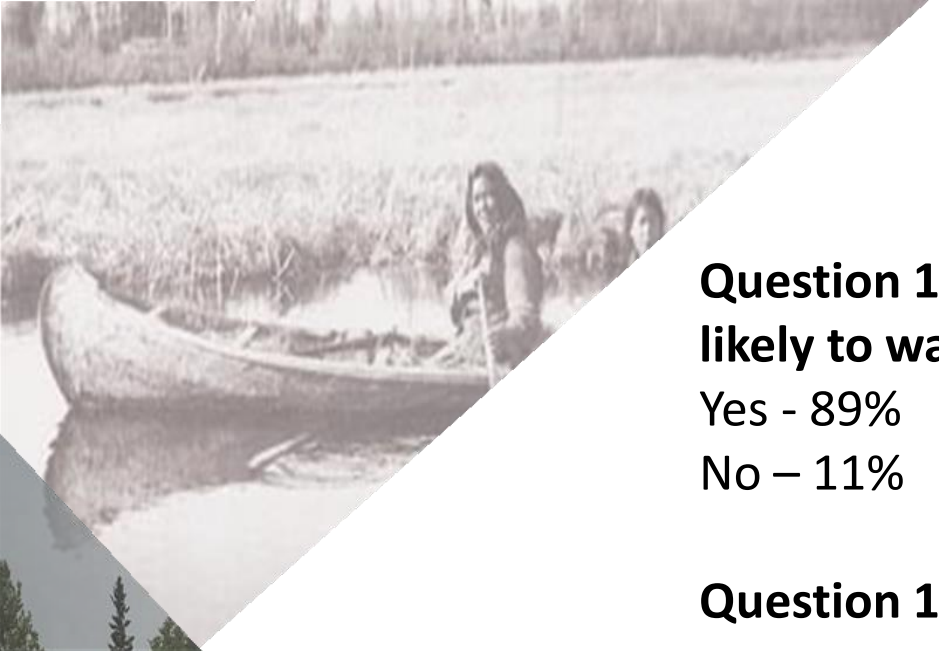
-Home to store

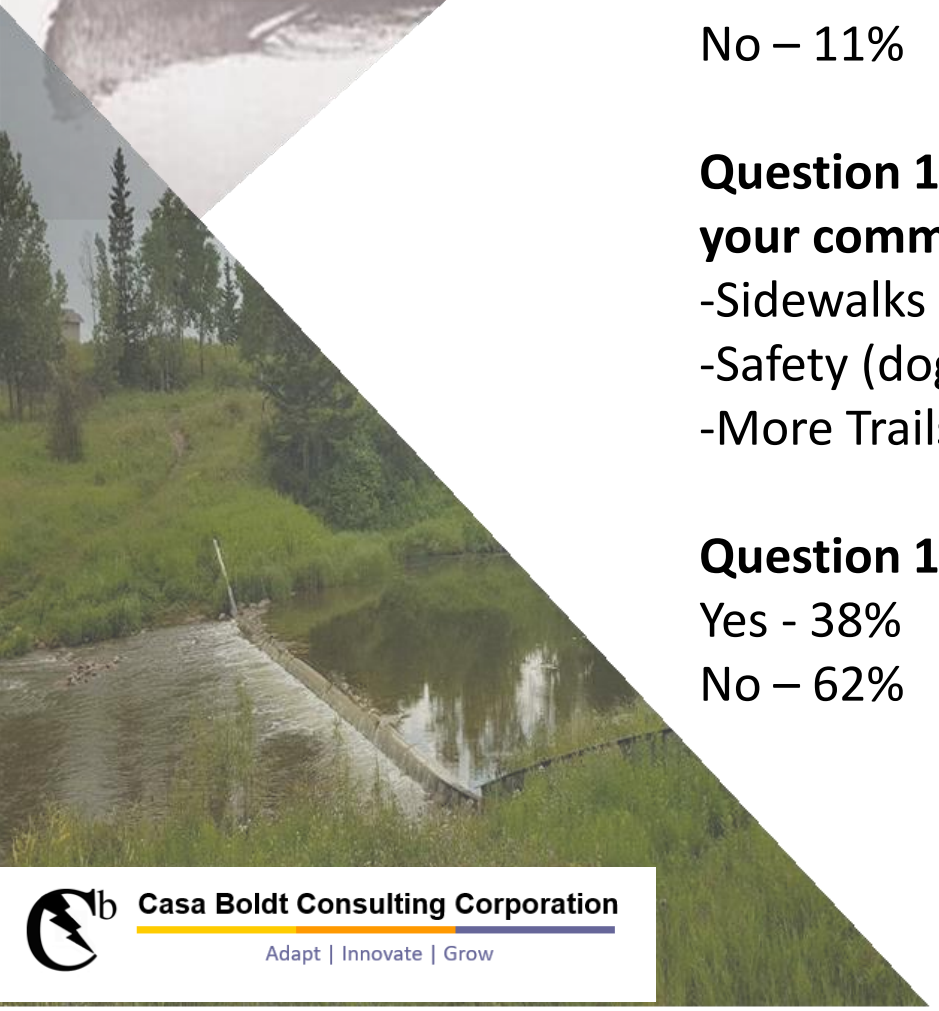
Question 10 - Do any school age youth live in your household?

Yes – 70%

No – 30%

Most (70%) travel by bus, but some get a ride or walk.





Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

Question 11 – If a pathway existed along Sturgeon Lake Road, would you be more likely to walk or cycle?

Yes - 89%

No – 11%

Question 12 - Do you have any ideas about how to improve walking and cycling in your community?

-Sidewalks

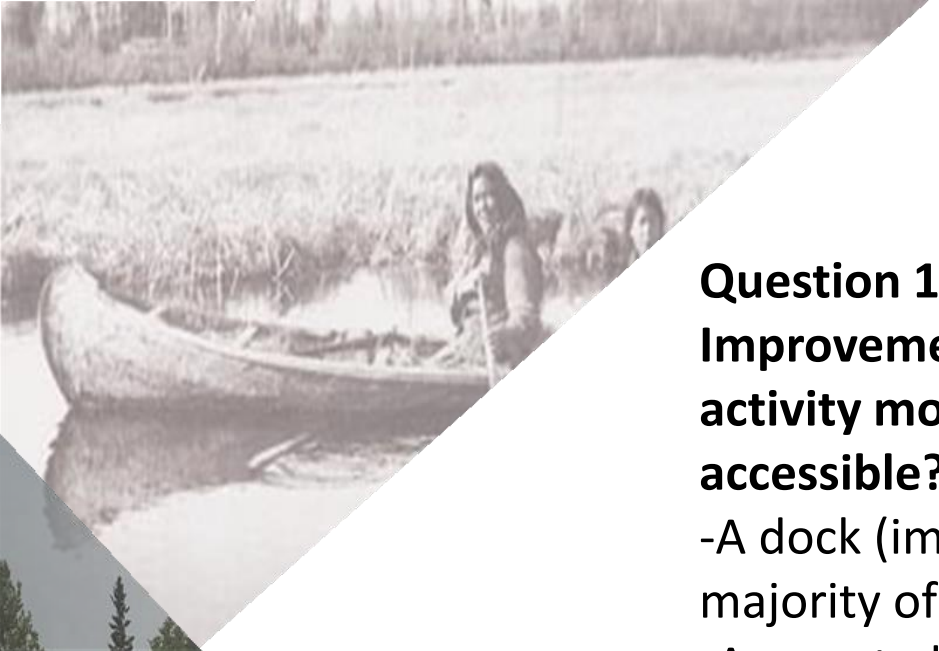
-Safety (dogs, people, traffic speed)

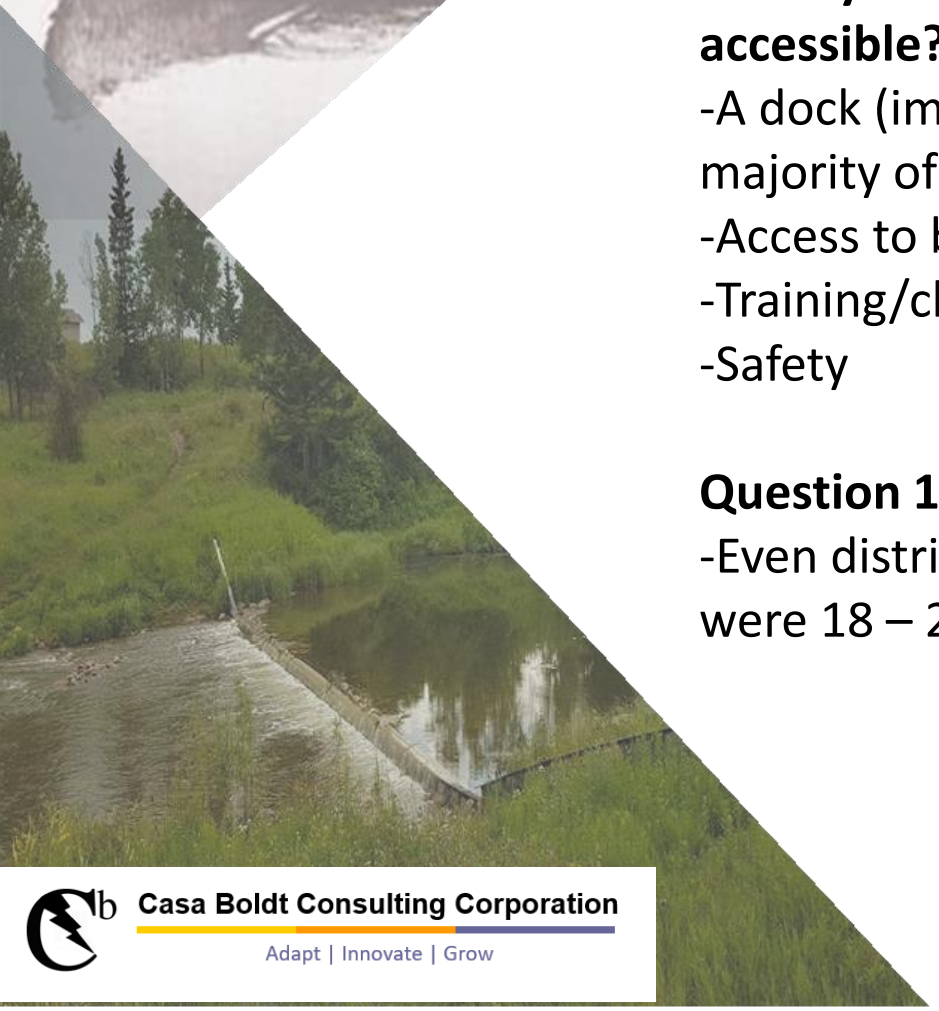
-More Trails

Question 13 - Do you canoe or kayak?

Yes - 38%

No – 62%





Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

Question 14 & 15 – Improvements to make the activity more enjoyable or accessible?

-A dock (improved dock) – majority of responses
-Access to boats
-Training/club
-Safety

Question 16 – What is your age?

-Even distribution except only 3% were 18 – 24 years old.

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Sturgeon Lake First Nation
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – SURVEY RESULTS

Common Themes

Safety:
-Traffic safety/speeds
-Dogs
-People/drugs

Pathways:
-Sidewalk along main road
-More pathways
-Lights/Crosswalks

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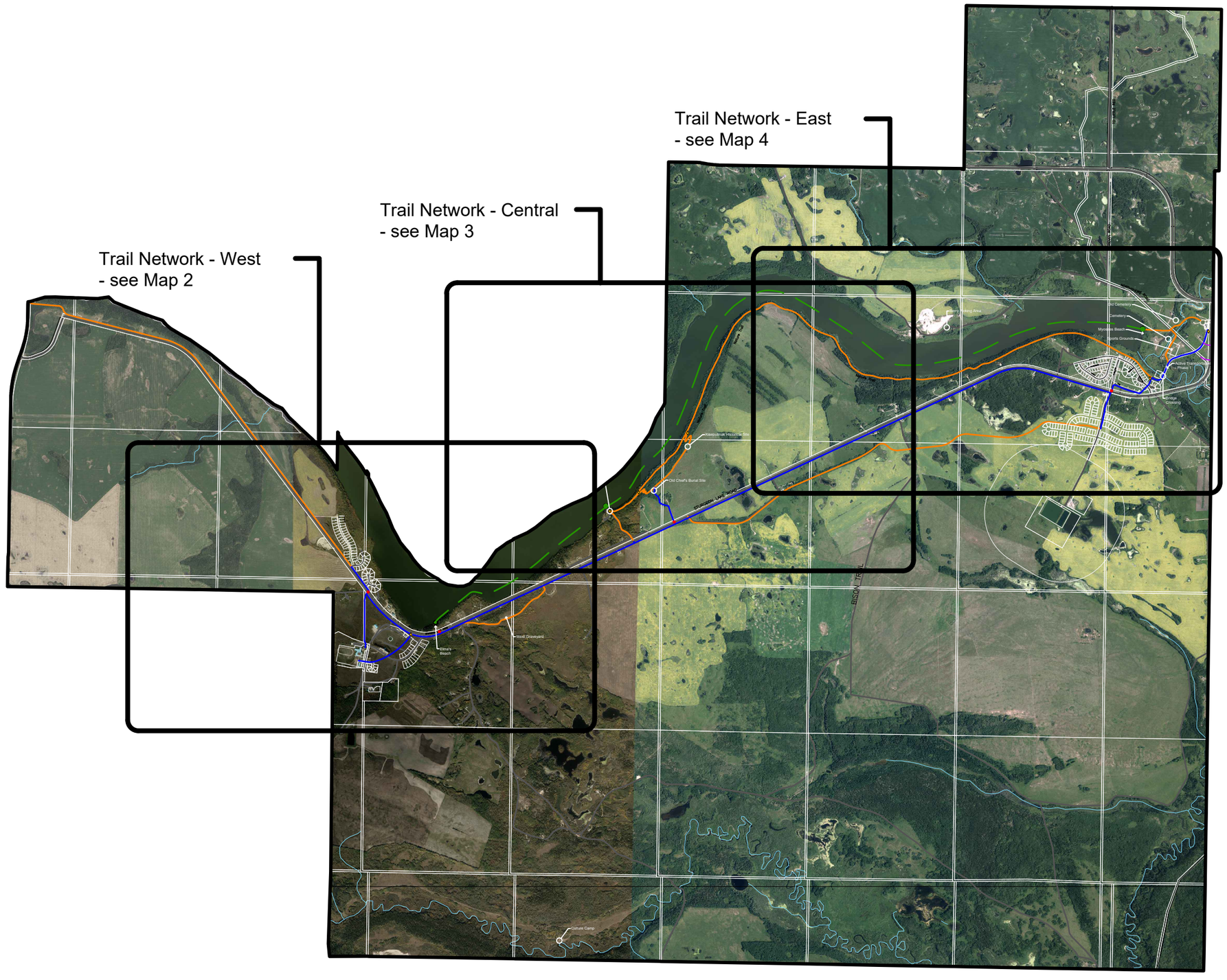
Appendix 2

Route Maps



LEGEND

- Existing Road
- Trail Head Sign
- Crosswalk
- Canoe Launch / Rental

Surface Treatment

- Paved
- Natural
- Water

Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Map 1

0 .5 1 2 4 km

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LEGEND

- Existing Road
- Trail Head Sign
- Crosswalk
- Canoe Launch / Rental

Surface Treatment

- Paved
- Natural
- Water

Amisk Cultura

Route #1

Route #6

Route #13

Route #1

Route #7

Route #1

Route #11

Elma's Beach

West Graveyard

Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Map 2

0 100 250 500 1000 m

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LEGEND

- Existing Road
- Trail Head Sign
- Crosswalk
- Canoe Launch / Rental

Surface Treatment

- Paved
- Natural
- Water

Berry Picking Area

Route #12

Route #4

Route #12

Nature Trail

Route #12

Route #4

Route #4

Route #1

Kiseputinak Historical Site

Route #5

Amisk Cultural Site

Route #12

Route #4

Old Chief's Burial Site

STURGEON LAKE ROAD

Route #8

Route #13

Route #10

Route #1

Route #1

AIL

Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Map 3

0 100 250 500 1000 m

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Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Map 4

0 100 250 500 1000 m

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